

Cup Feeding

What is cup feeding?

Cup feeding is a way to feed the baby without using a bottle and teat. It may be used if the baby is too weak to suck due to illness or if born early and very small. It is also used if the mother is ill or cannot be with her baby for some reason. Usually the mother's expressed milk is in the cup. However, if there is a medical reason to supplement the baby, a cup can also be used.

Why use a cup?

Cup feeding helps the baby to learn to put his/her tongue forward to lap the milk, which will promote good attachment at the breast.

Sucking on a bottle teat is a different action and a baby can get confused if moving from breastfeeding to bottle feeding and back again.

Cups are easy to keep clean so there is less risk of illness.

A cup cannot be propped—the caregiver needs to hold the baby and pay attention while feeding. This means the baby gets contact during feeding.



What kind of a cup?

Cup feeding does not need special equipment. You need a small plastic or glass cup with no top or spout. The cup should have a rolled rim with no sharp edge. It should be smooth, so it easy to clean. Flexible cups can be used too.

How to cup feed:

The baby needs to be awake and alert.

Hold her/him sitting upright in your lap.

Have the cup half-full of milk

Aim the edge of the cup at the corners of the upper lip with it gently touching the lower lip.

Do not press on the baby's lips.

Tip the cup so the milk just touches the baby's lips. **DO NOT POUR** the milk into the baby's mouth. Let the baby sip or lap the milk.

Let the cup stay in position with the milk just touching the baby's lips throughout the feed. Do not remove the cup if the baby pauses sucking.

When the baby has enough, she/he will close her mouth, pull away or otherwise show she/he wants to stop. If a very little was taken, after a short rest she may be willing to take some more. Watch the baby and go at her/his pace.

