

Tips for Caregivers

When a mother must be separated from her baby, it is important that baby's caregiver (dad, family members, and/or day care providers) understand how to handle and store human milk, as well as tips on introducing baby to a bottle or cup.

Protecting Breastfeeding for Mom and Baby

If a baby is cared for away from home, try to allow some quiet time for baby's mom to breastfeed when she drops her baby off and picks her baby up from day care. This allows a mom to shorten the time until her baby feeds at the breast again and will help to protect her milk supply. At the end of the day, it also allows a mom time to run an errand or two without hurrying home to feed a hungry baby.

If a baby is in day care for an entire eight-hour (+) workday, try not to feed baby within one to two hours of the time that mom will arrive to pick her baby up. If formula supplementation is needed because breast milk is in short supply on a certain day, try to give the formula earlier in the day, or give a smaller amount later in the day. Formula takes longer to digest and may decrease a baby's appetite when mom arrives and would like to breastfeed.

Giving a Bottle

Parents may want to introduce a bottle to their baby before leaving baby with a caregiver for the first time. Some babies will take a bottle easily. Others will resist. It may be easier if a bottle is introduced around three to four weeks of age, rather than later. If a baby resists a bottle, it may be helpful to have someone other than mom offer the bottle (while baby is learning).

If a baby has been exclusively bottle-fed pumped milk by mom, there is a chance that baby may resist taking a bottle from someone other than mom.

Remember that babies were not born to be bottle fed. **It is something they must learn.** The following tips may help if your baby resists taking a bottle:

- **Offer the bottle before baby is too hungry.** It is hard to learn something new when you are very hungry. Sometimes it helps if baby is just waking up and is still drowsy.
- **Try different feeding positions.** Some babies like to be held close in a cradle position. Others prefer to sit facing outwards. Feel free to experiment. You may find it helps to stand and rock or sway while offering the bottle, or offer the bottle while baby is in their car seat. Take baby out of the car seat when they have finished their bottle.
- **Tickle baby's mouth with the bottle and wait until baby opens wide.** Do not force the bottle nipple into baby's mouth.



5930 South 58th Street
Lincoln, NE 68516
(Trade Center)
402.423.6402

10818 Elm Street
Omaha, NE 68144
(Rockbrook Village)
402.502.0617

www.milkworks.org
[@MilkWorks](https://www.instagram.com/MilkWorks)
[@milkworks](https://www.facebook.com/milkworks)

- **Breastfed babies usually do best with a standard size, slow flow nipple.** A slow flow nipple means that baby does not have to worry about too much milk coming out, and, for the most part, must suckle to remove milk. When a baby is at day care, a slow flow bottle may keep a baby from drinking too fast or taking too much milk from the bottle. This is important if a mom is working hard to maintain her milk supply. A standard size nipple allows a baby to latch on to the whole nipple, and not just the tip of the nipple. Even though wide mouth nipples are often marketed as “more like mother’s breast,” many babies cannot fit the entire wide nipple in their mouth. In addition, most babies handle a bottle best when they are in a semi-upright position, or lying on their side, rather than flat on their back. These positions help a baby to handle the milk flow from a bottle. (See MilkWorks [Paced Bottle Feeding](#) handout)
- **Be patient while your baby learns to feed from a bottle.** If your baby is older than three months, you may want to consider using a feeding cup with a flow valve on it (this means that a baby must actively suck to remove the milk from the cup). If younger than 3 months, you could try an open cup instead. Here is a video showing that technique: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJmPDn3EA24>
- **Babies will generally drink between two and four ounces at a feeding.** It is unlikely that a baby will comfortably take a bottle that contains more than five ounces. Between one and six months of age, most babies will consume between 20 and 30 ounces a day.

Storing Milk

(For more detailed information, see our information on [Collecting and Storing Pumped Milk](#).)

- Human milk may not look like cow’s milk or formula. It is normal to be white with a blue, yellow, or brown tinge. The color may change from bottle to bottle, depending upon when mom pumped and what she recently ate.
- Human milk is not homogenized, so it naturally separates into layers of milk and cream. There may be particles of fat floating in the milk. Shake gently to mix the milk.
- Human milk is durable and does not spoil easily. It is ideal to chill your milk immediately after expressing. Optimal storage at room temperature is four hours. Milk kept at room temperature between four and eight hours is not necessarily bad for your baby, however, it starts to lose some of its protective factors. Spoiled milk will smell sour or taste bad.
- Frozen milk can be defrosted in the refrigerator, or by putting the container of milk in a pan of warm water. Do not microwave and do not heat above body temperature. Defrosted milk should not be re-frozen and is good for up to 24 hours if stored in the refrigerator.

Breastfed Baby and Their Stools

- Breastfed babies may stool with each feeding or less often. Most babies will stool at least once a day.
- Breastfed stools are generally mustard-yellow and semi-liquid. There may be small curds in the stool. If a baby is not eating solid food or being fed formula, their stools generally do not smell unpleasant. Once solids or formula are introduced, you will notice changes in a baby’s stool.

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