

# MY BABY WON'T TAKE A BOTTLE, NOW WHAT?

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Your last days of maternity leave are counting down and you are understandably nervous about leaving your baby and adjusting to life as a working breastfeeding mother, and now you have one more hurdle to overcome: how do I get my breastfed baby to take a bottle?

## Tips and Tricks to Help your Breastfed Baby Take a Bottle

- 1. Have dad/partner try to give the bottle, not mom.**

Babies can smell their moms and know where to go to get breastmilk straight from the tap. They may not be as open to taking a bottle from mom, when what they know and love [those boobies!] are just inches away. If you can, hand the bottle off to dad/partner and leave the room. Maybe even go for a short walk around the block so you don't have to worry about rushing in at the first sounds of fussiness. If dad/partner is not successful, have an experienced bottle feeder [grandma /grandpa, aunt/uncle, friend, nanny, etc] give it a try.
- 2. Patience is key!**

If your baby isn't interested, try at a different time of day. Play around with offering a bottle in the morning, after a nap, or in the evening. If baby isn't as receptive to drinking milk from a bottle as you might hope for, take a deep breath, and try again a different day. Stay patient and try not to force it so much that the baby begins associating crying and being unhappy with the repeated attempts of a bottle being presented to them. Offer the bottle in between feedings, when baby is not super hungry, and is showing the first signs of hunger.
- 3. Be playful!**

Rest the nipple on your baby's philtrum [the crease that connects her upper lip to her nose] and let her decide when she will take it in her mouth. This mimics what goes on during breastfeeding.
- 4. Try different feeding techniques.**

A more upright, sitting position is usually recommended first when we talk about paced bottle-feeding and bottle-feeding in a breastfeeding-friendly manner. However, if these techniques just aren't working for you, don't be afraid to try various positions. Try feeding your baby with a bottle in a cradle hold. If that doesn't work, try feeding her facing you, either on your lap or in a bouncy chair. You can also try walking around.
- 5. Remind her of Mom.**

Some babies like to smell their moms while bottle feeding, so let her snuggle in one of mom's t-shirts or sitting on mom's side of the bed, next to mom's pillow.
- 6. Choose a bottle nipple that looks most like your anatomy.**

Start with a slow-flow nipple. This will give your baby more sucking time, just like at breast. The goal is to make bottle-feeding as similar to breastfeeding as possible, and this includes the amount of time spent sucking. Many women find that a shorter bottle nipple that has a wide base works better than a long nipple and small base. The wider base will encourage baby to open her mouth wider, like she does at the breast.

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**7. Experiment with different bottles and nipples.**

Babies have preferences, so give yours an opportunity to choose her bottle and nipple [without breaking the bank, of course!].

**8. Warm-up the bottle nipple.**

Warm the nipple under running water before offering it to your baby. She might have a temperature preference, too.

**9. You can always try a cup.**

Yes, even infants can drink from a cup. They usually lap it up, rather than actually gulping.

**10. Try and try again!**

Something that didn't work the first time around may work on another day. It is like introducing avocado to your baby for the first time. Some babies love it and others need to taste it over ten times before they enjoy it.

