

Feeding Infants

This is general information and instructions.

Please follow the specific instructions discussed at your provider's office.

Important information about feeding infants with a cleft lip and/or cleft palate

Babies with a cleft lip and palate or cleft palate are not able to produce the suction required to extract milk from a standard bottle. Babies with cleft lip alone may be able to breastfeed or use a standard bottle. First, let us start with some general feeding information.

- It is normal for newborn infants to lose weight after birth (up to 10%), however they should be back to birth weight by 2 weeks of age.
- From 0-6 months, baby should gain 0.5-1 ounce per day. At 6 months, old baby should be double his or her birth weight. From 6-12 months baby should gain 3-5 ounces per week. At 1 year baby should be triple his or her birth weight.
- Having a weekly weight check is important for 1-2 months, longer if needed. This can be done at your baby's pediatrician's office or at home. Be sure that you weigh your baby without clothes for accuracy.
- Be sure, when feeding that baby is positioned upright. This will help lessen the chances of milk going through the cleft into the nose. If this does happen, it is normal.
- Always place the nipple of the bottle on the non-cleft side with the nipple pointed down. Be sure the nipple fills with milk. Infants will move the nipple to where it is most comfortable for them.
- Feedings should be no more than 30 minutes. Going beyond 30 minutes burns more calories than baby is taking in. This will result in no to slow weight gain or weight loss.
- Babies with clefts will need to burp more often during feedings.

What type of bottles can an infant with a cleft use?

There are some specialty bottles designed for feeding babies with clefts. The two types of bottles are *infant-paced* and *assisted-delivery*. Families can call The Florida Cleft and Craniofacial Network for two free starter bottles of their choice at 800.726.2029.

INFANT-PACED

- ✓ The infant-paced bottle is the Dr. Brown's Specialty Feeding System®. With this type of bottle, baby will control the flow of milk.

ASSISTED-DELIVERY

- ✓ The assisted-delivery bottles are the Mead Johnson Cleft Lip/Palate Nurser® and the Medela Special Needs Feeder®. With these bottles, you assist your baby with milk flow.