

Feeding your Newborn Baby with Cleft Lip, with or without Cleft Palate



Most babies born with a cleft lip (with or without cleft palate) feed well with support. Maternity hospital staff, along with your specialist cleft nurse or speech and language therapist from the cleft team, will offer this support.

The aim is that you and your baby enjoy feeding and that your baby is gaining enough weight. Your Public Health Nurse will check your baby's weight once you are at home.

Cleft Lip Only

Babies with a cleft lip only can usually feed well by breast or ordinary bottle. Some may have difficulty completely closing their lips around the breast or bottle and you may need further advice.

Cleft Involving the Palate

When there's a cleft palate (gap in the roof of the mouth) advice and help will be given to you. Babies born with a cleft palate may have difficulty getting a strong suck on their mother's breast or on an ordinary baby bottle. This can cause your baby to get tired while feeding. Long feeding times use up more of your baby's energy which can affect their weight gain. Generally each feed should take no longer than 30 - 40 minutes. With support breast feeding may be possible; exclusive breastfeeding however can be difficult with some types of cleft. Expressed breast milk can be a good choice for your baby. With the right support, feeding should be an enjoyable time between parent and baby. See below for some helpful ideas:

What Can Help?

When breastfeeding, breast compression can increase the flow of milk to help your baby feed. Specialised bottles may also be needed. These bottles are usually **soft** so they can be **gently squeezed** while your baby is sucking. There are different types of bottle and teat depending on your baby's needs. The type of bottle offered depends on your maternity unit, your cleft team's advice and on what works best for you and your baby. Every baby is unique; you and your baby are learning and you will need to allow yourself time to feel comfortable and relaxed with feeding. Some of the bottle types available are on the list attached. These can be used with expressed breast milk or infant formula. The cleft team can help you choose a bottle to suit your baby. You or your Public Health Nurse can contact the cleft team if you have any questions about feeding.




Common topics discussed with parents

- Positions for your baby during feeding
- Milk coming down the nose during feeds
- Wind, colic and reflux concerns
- Bottle and teat choices
- Babies requiring extra help by tube feeding
- Breast feeding support; assistance with milk production
- Expected weight gain
- Feeding times, volumes and durations
- Spoon feeding advice when 4-6 months

Further information is also available on the Irish and UK Cleft association websites:

www.cleft.ie www.clapa.com



Feeding equipment	Supplier details
<p><u>Breast pumps</u> Various brands are available to purchase or hire to support a mother's milk production when exclusive breast feeding is difficult. If a mother needs to fully express all feeds then a hospital grade double pump e.g. Medela Symphony Pump may be recommended. Other pump options work well if full milk expression is not required.</p>	<p>Please discuss with your midwife or Lactation Consultant in your Maternity Hospital for their recommended products, suppliers and price list.</p> 
<p><u>Haberman Feeder</u> Readily available in most maternity hospitals. Recommended by Dublin Cleft Teams. The long teat is squeezed as the baby feeds. Valve mechanism inside the teat. Although relatively expensive it is successful with most babies. Your health professional will show you how to put the bottle together and how to use it correctly.</p>	<p>Medicare: (01) 2014900 Email: info@medicare.ie www.medicare.ie</p> <p>Most pharmacies can place an order for you. Can also be purchased on Amazon & EBay sites.</p>  <p>Information on: https://www.medela.com/breastfeeding-professionals/products/feeding/special-needs-feeder</p>
<p><u>Mam Soft Bottle</u> Available in some maternity hospitals Recommended by Dublin Cleft Teams. Simple, soft and squeezable bottle. Lower cost than other bottles with bottle & teats ordered separately. Works best with a Mam vented newborn (size 1) or all ages (size 2) teat. Standard NUK latex (size 1) for narrow neck bottles also fit. Requires instruction for use by a health professional.</p>	<p>No Irish based supplier.</p> <p>Order teats/bottles from UK: www.clapa.com</p> <p>Extra NUK teat supply from Maternity Unit or online: https://teat.shop/teat-latex-medium.html</p> <p>The Irish Cleft Association: www.cleft.ie can supply a starter pack (2 bottles/4 teats) if contacted</p> 
<p><u>Other options</u> Some parents have reported success with cheaper soft bottles sourced from supermarkets or discount shops that, by the nature of their material, can be squeezed. Various shaped teats and spoons have been used by parents with limited success reported. Enlarging or cutting a hole in a teat is not recommended as it may be unsafe for feeding.</p>	<p>Feeding advice and feeding assessments are available by contacting your local cleft team.</p> <p>Further information on cleft: www.cleft.ie www.clapa.com</p> <p>It is important that if parents find a bottle that works for them and their baby, that they ensure replacement bottles can be sourced during the 1st year of life</p>

Feeding equipment

Supplier details

Dr. Brown's Specialty Feeding Bottle

Relatively new bottle introduced from the USA for babies with cleft.

The milk flow can be a little fast for some babies when they are very young.

Reported by parents to be a successful option for babies who are a few weeks' old and already established feeders.

No squeezing required as the baby's tongue & gum action, rather than sucking, causes the milk to flow from the bottle.

The idea is that the baby can "self-regulate" a feed but it may not work for every baby.

Middle range cost. Teats come in different sizes.

Advise to contact your cleft team before ordering.

No Irish based supplier.

Order from UK:
www.clapa.com

Also available on:
www.amazon.com

Information online:
<http://www.drbrownsbaby.com/medical/products/new-dr-browns-speciality-feeding-system>

Also available on: www.amazon.com



Vital Baby Nurture Bottle

Squeezable bottle system.

Use with caution when your baby is very young as the flow can be fast at times.

Parents have sourced this bottle independently from supermarkets and pharmacies with varied success reported to cleft teams.

Price varies.

Advise to contact your cleft team before ordering.

Available from selected supermarkets and pharmacies.

Information on:
www.vitalbaby.com

(Search for Silicone Vital Baby Nurture range)



Nuby Bottle

Squeezable bottle system.

Use with caution when your baby is very young as the flow can be fast at times.

Parents have sourced this bottle independently from supermarkets and pharmacies with varied success reported to cleft teams.

Price varies.

Advise to contact your cleft team before ordering.

Available from selected supermarkets and pharmacies.

Information on:
www.nuby-uk.com

(Search for Nuby Natural Touch range)



Remember your cleft team are happy to help you and your baby with any feeding difficulties that come up. They can offer specialized advice and direct you to your local supports and care teams. For further information please contact your linked Cleft team at either CHI Temple Street or Crumlin locations.

Author: Jane Gunn, Version: 2

Contributors: Laura Duggan, Noirin Carroll, Celine Lenihan, Christina Cotter

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