

If Your Baby Must Take A Bottle

No need to hurry. Starting a bottle early doesn't mean your baby will take it better, and studies show that using a bottle before breastfeeding is well established can lead to early weaning. Many mothers wait until they begin storing milk for work - often about two weeks before their first day. Have someone other than Mom offer the bottle. Most babies see no reason to accept a substitute if the Real Thing is nearby. Beyond that, every baby is an individual. What works for one baby won't work for another. Be patient, and be creative. Something will work. You might try to:

Use Distraction And Other Techniques:

- Offer it when the baby isn't really hungry. Let him use it as a plaything at first. Don't make an issue of having the teat go in the mouth right away. Let him explore it and find out for himself that there's something in it. This may be the single most effective suggestion.
- Dance while you offer the bottle, or carry him outside and offer the bottle while he faces away.
- Offer the bottle when he's really sleepy - either just waking up or just drifting off. This is another classic way to encourage acceptance.

Make Bottle-Feeding Seem More Like Nursing:

- Warm the teat and the milk (but not in a microwave!).
- Hold the baby close, in a nursing position.
- Put his mother's milk in the bottle. Squeeze a drop onto the tip for him to taste. Touch his lip with the drop of milk and let him take it into his mouth, as his mother would with her own nipple, rather than forcing it into his mouth.
- Experiment with different teats and hole sizes. The ones that are "most like mother herself" or "orthodontic" are really just marketing gimmicks. Plain old ordinary may be best.
- Use lots of cuddling while you offer the bottle.

Or Make Bottle-Feeding Very Different From Nursing:

- Offer a plain cup, sippy cup, or medicine spoon. Nobody said milk has to come from a bottle! Baby might like to practice in the bathtub with Mom. Or offer crushed frozen milk, with a spoon.
- Chill the bottle, milk, and teat.
- Hold the baby in a totally different position, maybe facing away from you, or in an infant seat.
- Offer the bottle in a new setting - in the sitter's home or while he's riding in a car.
- If the baby has begun solids, put water or juice in the bottle, then water or juice with just a little milk in it, and gradually increase the amount of milk.

Maybe Baby Just Prefers To Wait For Mom.

If your baby can go 4 or 6 or 8 hours at night, he may be willing to go 4 or 6 or 8 hours during the day instead... provided he has plenty of nursing time, day and night, when you're together. Especially if you work part-time, this may be the simplest solution for both of you.

**Remember that the first week or two of work may be rocky
for both the mother and baby.**

Both are having to learn many new things in a short time. It gets better. Really!