

Bottle Feeding Your Preterm Baby at Home

Your baby's home care plan

As you prepare for discharge, we will work with you to create your baby's home care plan. You may talk with your baby's care providers, nurses, feeding therapists, and nutritionists. You have many resources to help you create a plan that you feel comfortable and confident about!

Feeding Reminders

- Feed your baby every 2 to 4 hours. If your baby sleeps longer than 4 hours, wake your baby for a feeding.
- When and how much your baby eats at a feeding will vary. Focus on the total amount your baby takes over the whole day, not the amount taken at 1 feeding. Follow the instructions on your baby's discharge sheet.

It is OK to give your baby breast milk or formula that is at room temperature. If the milk is cold, stand the bottle in a bowl of warm water for 15 minutes.

Before you feed it to your baby, drip a little onto your wrist. It should feel warm, not hot.

- **Do not microwave breast milk or formula.** It will not heat evenly and can burn your baby. And, important vitamins may be destroyed.
- Hold your baby and the bottle while feeding. Do not prop up the bottle. Doing so can cause your baby to choke.



Be sure to hold both your baby and the bottle during feedings.

- Avoid changing nipple types when your baby is first home.

Formula and Bottle Care

- At first, your baby may be on a formula that contains iron and extra nutrients. If your baby is on formula:
 - Use it as directed on the discharge sheet. Your baby's pediatrician will tell you when to change formulas.
 - Throw away formula that has been at room temperature for 1 hour or more after feeding begins.
 - After 24 hours, throw out any prepared formula that was not used.
- Clean bottles and nipples with soap and clean, hot water.

Questions?

If you do not understand something, please ask questions. Every question you ask is important!

- Ask any care provider when you do not understand a medical term.
- Ask for more information when you do not understand a treatment or why it needs to be done. Ask about possible side effects.
- Keep asking questions until you feel you understand what you need to know.

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit:
206.598.4606