

BREASTFEEDING ANSWERS

Lactation Aid at the Breast

Lactation aids at the breast are used if your baby needs more milk. It will allow your baby to receive a supplement and breastfeed at the same time. It will also help to increase your breast milk production. Your baby needs to be able to:

- Latch to your breast
- Form a seal at your breast

You will need:

- Baby bottle with a nipple
- 36-inch #5 French feeding tube
- Small syringe for cleaning the tube
- Supplement fluid – expressed breast milk or a breast milk substitute if breast milk is not available
- Scissors and tape

Setting up the lactation aid:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Make the bottle nipple larger by cutting it with clean scissors.
3. Insert the smaller tip of the feeding tube through the hole in the bottle nipple so that the larger end will sit in the bottle.
4. Pour the supplement into the bottle.
5. Put the larger end of the feeding tube into the bottle making sure it is covered with milk.
6. Screw the nipple and cap onto the bottle. This is to help prevent spilling.



7. Place the bottle at the level of your chest. For example, tucked into your bra, shirt pocket, or on a flat surface nearby.

Caution: If the bottle is too high, the milk will flow too fast and your baby could choke. If the bottle is too low, your baby may become frustrated or lose interest in feeding.

8. Tape the feeding tube to your breast (usually just behind the areola). Be sure that baby cannot suck the tape into their mouth. The tubing tip should be 6mm (quarter inch) past the tip of your nipple.
9. Latch your baby to the breast.
10. You can also latch your baby first and then slip the tip of the tube into the corner of their mouth.
11. When the tube is in the right place, you will see milk start to move through the tube. You will also be able to hear your baby swallowing milk.

Cleaning the feeding tube:

- Fill a syringe with hot water. Insert the syringe into the larger end of the tube. Push the plunger to force water into the tube. Repeat 3-5 times
- Soap is not needed but if you choose to use soap, make sure the tube is rinsed very well.
- Use the syringe to force 1-2 plungers of air through the tube to get rid of any water.
- Air dry the tube in a clean area.
- Use a new tube when the tube becomes stiff, brittle or discoloured.
- If using breastmilk substitute (formula) use a new tube each day
- Clean the bottle and nipple as usual.

Weaning from the lactation aid

Using a lactation aid may be a temporary measure or be needed in the long-term, it depends on your individual circumstances. It is important for you and your baby to have regular appointments with a breastfeeding clinic or healthcare provider while using the lactation aid. These appointments help us to make decisions on how long to use the lactation aid and how much supplement is needed.



For more information call:

Family Health Information Line at 705-474-1400 ext. 5351 or healthy.families@healthunit.ca. Our nurses are available from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

References:

Breastfeeding Answers: A Guide for Helping Families, Second Edition by Nancy Mohrbacher; IBC (2021)
Centre for Disease Control (2024): <https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/faq/>

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