



# Finger Feeding Your Baby

Finger feeding is sometimes used to help babies learn how to suckle more effectively.

Finger feeding can help train some babies who have a problem with tongue thrusting or tongue bunching.

Finger feeding can help some cautious babies strengthen their suck.

Finger feeding is only for temporary use.

Finger feeding should be used with help from a lactation consultant.

1. Fill SNS (supplemental nursing system) with expressed breastmilk and/or formula.
2. Clip container of milk on your clothing or the pillow behind you, or hang it around your neck. Be sure the tube is closed off until you are ready for your baby to eat.
3. Please keep fingernails short and your hands clean.
4. Tape the tube with a small piece of paper tape to your finger. With the pad of your finger facing up, place the tip of the soft tube at the tip of your finger. (you can use your index, middle finger or thumb).
5. Hold baby in comfortable position for you, Holding baby skin to skin with mom, creates a pleasant feeling, just like feeding at the breast.
6. Lightly tickle your baby's lip with your finger to bring out the rooting reflex. This helps your baby to pull your finger into his/her mouth.
7. Open the tube so that the milk can come down. As your baby sucks, milk will be withdrawn from the container. Whereas bottle nipples flow very fast, the valve in the SNS prevents the milk from overwhelming the baby with too fast of flow. This will keep your baby from worrying that, "suckling vigorously makes me drown and should be avoided."
8. Gently allow baby to suck your finger into her mouth until your finger tip touches the junction of the hard and soft palate. (The place where the hard part of the roof of the mouth meets the soft part in the back.)The pad of your finger should be facing up. The baby's lips should be flanged outward, not sucked in. If baby gags you are in too far.
9. Sometimes squeezing a few drops in the baby's mouth by slightly compressing the soft bulb at the top of the tube may help elicit the swallow-suck reflex.

## Do not force fluid into baby's mouth.

As new parents, you will need a lot of support and encouragement. Plan for the extra time it takes to pump and feed the baby. All together it could easily take an hour at first. Sleep when the baby sleeps and let people help you with meals and housework.

Like breastfeeding, finger feeding is a skill that requires doing several things at the same time. At first, it may feel awkward. Give yourself time and it will be easier.



