



TEN STEP TUESDAY

Alternative Feeding Methods

It's Ten Step Tuesday!



This Tuesday is all about Alternative Feeding Methods. Cup feeding, spoon feeding, syringe feeding, at-breast supplementing, finger feeding, and paced bottle feeding are methods that allow oral supplementation of the baby who is unable to obtain a sufficient amount of breast milk from the breast. For most, these are temporary measures, and the ultimate goal is to establish feeding at the breast.

As IBCLCs, we are often asked which method is the best. Or how to know which method to try first. Like so many things in lactation land, there is not one right answer! The following info will help you consider the various options and find the best solution to support the parents' broader feeding goals.

When selecting a method, consider:

- Cost and availability
- Ease of use and cleaning
- If adequate volume can be fed in 20-30 minutes
- Maternal preference
- Expertise of healthcare staff
- Whether or not method enhances breastfeeding skills
- Suitable for the length of time supplement may be needed
- Whether or not baby is able to latch to the breast

Note: Baby must be awake and participatory for any of these feeding methods!

For more information contact

Cara Gerhardt, BSN RN IBCLC, coordinator@high5kansas.org



Alternative Feeding Methods

Method	Advantages	Limitations
<p>Sipping/lapping Method (spoon, cup, dropper or syringe)</p> <p>Watch this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkhSJ16FHfY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideal for small volumes – colostrum after hand expression • Inexpensive • Easy to clean • Readily available • May help with transition to breast • Oral muscle use more like breastfeeding • Viewed as temporary • Baby controls cup feeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spillage and loss of the fluid • Feedings may take longer • Need training for safe delivery
<p>At-Breast Supplement (Tube and Syringe and Supplemental Nursing System)</p> <p>Watch this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCVJjCMzx98</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforces breastfeeding • Condenses feeding time (by breastfeeding and supplementing at same time) • Can improve suckling skills • Stimulates milk production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be time-consuming and cumbersome for parents • Baby may suck on tube like straw • Some systems are expensive • Infant must be able to latch and transfer • Difficult to clean
<p>Finger Feeding</p> <p>Watch this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRFgA_uHW1g</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May make transition to breast easier • May be used to improve sucking skills • Viewed as temporary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfamiliar to many parents • Equipment may be more difficult to obtain for parents
<p>Bottle Feeding</p> <p>Watch this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wumI31Oyc8k</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiar and culturally acceptable • Readily available • Relatively inexpensive • Some babies can take a larger volume in shorter time • Used for long term feeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have a faster flow – need to pace the feeding and use slow flow nipple • May lead to overfeeding • Might replace breastfeeding • May interfere with transition back to breastfeeding • Uses different oral muscles