

Commonly asked questions:

I plan to breastfeed my baby. Why are we discussing nipple and bottles?

We support breastfeeding for our mothers and babies, but most infants in the NICU will need to be fed by mouth 'round the clock as they mature. Supporting this developmental milestone means using a nipple / bottle system for some or all of your baby's feedings. Many of these babies also need higher calorie feedings which breast feeding alone can't supply.

What about nipple confusion?

Even the experts don't agree that nipple confusion between bottle and breast exists. We want to support your baby's natural desire to take feedings by mouth. Our lactation experts will work with you for breastfeeding support.

Which nipple and bottle system should I buy?

Parents often try to use nipples and bottles they used with their other children. This is a good place to start. Remember that not all infants enjoy eating from the same type of bottle.

Are you a first time parent, or does your baby have special feeding needs? You might first want to try a nipple / bottle system available in the hospital.

How do I choose a nipple 'flow'?

It can be hard to decide what 'flow' or month rating to select when buying a nipple. The best suggestion is to buy 2 different flows, one for a newborn and one for the next flow rating or age. You and the nurse can evaluate which nipple your baby eats with best. Infants who will also be breastfeeding may benefit from a slower flow nipple when eating both from breast and bottle. Babies with a vigorous suck may benefit from a faster flow nipple.

What's the difference between silicon and latex nipples?

Latex nipples are often a red-brown color; silicon nipples can be clear or tinted. We do not recommend using latex nipples. Silicon nipples are softer and retain their shape longer.

Should I buy a nipple that is meant to be used for premature babies?

We do not recommend using nipples that are marketed as 'premie' or 'newborn' if the nipples are smaller than regular size nipples. An effective suck is best supported by a nipple that a baby can pull into the mouth fully and compress between the tongue and the top of the mouth.

How should I clean my baby's nipples and bottles at home?

The best method to use is the one recommended by the manufacturer of the nipple and bottle that you bought.

How should I clean my baby's nipples and bottles while in the hospital?

It's best to clean your baby's nipples and bottles at home. When you're re-using the same nipple and bottle here, you should wash each piece thoroughly with detergent or castile soap using a bottle brush, rinse and dry well.

I've been hearing about BPA. What is it?

BPA (bisphenol A) is a chemical found in many food containers. It is thought that this chemical may be linked to certain health problems. Because it is possible that this chemical may leach into fluid, some parents choose to avoid products that contain this substance. Plastic baby bottles made without BPA will be labeled. For safety reasons, we ask that you do not bring glass baby bottles to the NICU.

Can a bottle really prevent my baby from having colic?

No. Some bottles are designed to introduce less air to a baby. This may help decrease the amount of air that a baby swallows, but the causes of colic may be things that are not related to the bottle style.



Nipple and Bottle Feeding Systems for NICU Infants



Nipple and Bottle Infant Feeding Systems

Recommendations for Families

Transitioning to nipple/bottle feeding is a process that we engage in together. When your infant has begun bottle feeding, you may want to feed your baby with a nipple/bottle system that you will be using at home. The advantage of this approach is that you and your baby will become accustomed to the nipple and bottle, and there will be one less change to encounter once you leave the NICU.

Participating in this process will mean a commitment from you, the parent. You will need to:

- Provide a sufficient quantity of nipples and bottles.
- Talk with your baby's nurse about the number of nipples and bottles you need.
- Purchase new nipples.
- Purchase a bottle brush for when bottles and nipples must be cleaned in the NICU.
- Routinely sanitizing the nipples and bottles at home.

If there is a nipple/bottle system that you like, you may choose to use that system. You might need to change the nipple and bottle system your baby is using as we evaluate how well your baby eats with that nipple and bottle. It might take up to 3 days for your baby to get used to a new nipple.

If you are interested in trying a different bottle than you used before or you aren't familiar with what's out there, here are some descriptions of commonly used nipple/bottle systems. (Do not bring glass baby bottles to the NICU.)



Standard Nipple / Bottle Systems

- Made by EvenFlo, Playtex, Medela, Gerber and others
- Usually accepts nipples from other manufacturers
- Offers a variety of silicon nipple flows
- Many offer BPA free products



Playtex NaturaLatch Drop-In System

- Silicon slow and fast flow nipples; also a tri-cut nipple
- BPA free
- Claims to be a good choice for breastfeeding infants
- Claims to reduce gas



Considerations:

- ◆ Drop-in bags can make it difficult to judge how much infant has taken
- ◆ No medium flow nipple

The information in this pamphlet is meant to be used as a guideline when choosing a nipple/bottle system. The NICU staff does not endorse any one particular system. Your baby's feeding ability plays a large role in what nipple and bottle system your baby uses.

Avent

- Silicon nipples with flow rate 1-4, and a Variflow nipple
- BPA free
- Claims that infants have less colic with its one piece anticolic system



Considerations:

- ◆ Some reports of leaking bottles
- ◆ Some infants have difficulty feeding with this system

Born Free

- Silicon slow, medium and fast flow nipples; also Y-cut and variable flow nipple
- BPA free
- Claims that infants are less fussy with its 'Anti-colic' vent



Considerations:

- ◆ Has 4 parts to clean and reassemble

Doctor Brown

- Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 wide neck and standard shape silicon nipples; also a Y-cut nipple
- BPA Free
- Claims to keep infants from swallowing air



Considerations:

- ◆ Has 6 parts to clean and reassemble
- ◆ Requires special cleaning brush