

Unconfusing Nipple Confusion

by Michelle Davis-Dash, MD



Breastfeeding is not always beautiful, fun, and easy. As a matter of fact, sometimes it can be downright ugly and hard. There's one important thing to remember: You are not alone.

One of the frustrations that breastfeeding mothers encounter is method of feeding. In the beginning, there's such a sense of accomplishment putting baby to breast and no longer feeling the pain and dread that was felt in the beginning. A new mom feels a sense of pride seeing her dear baby satiated by nursing at her breast and the sweet satisfied "milk coma" that comes after.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's breastfeeding report card (www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/reportcard.htm), more than 80 percent of new moms try breastfeeding. Despite the many benefits of breastfeeding, most moms, for various professional and personal reasons, introduce a bottle at some point. Many babies resist this change. It's a "no go." The new moms panic, thinking, "My baby is going to starve. I'll never be able to leave the house because I have to be here to feed my baby."



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Rest assured, there is hope. When a baby refuses to accept a bottle, it's called "nipple confusion." With some diligence, patience, time, and simple solutions, you can unconfuse your baby.

01

Before you try to give your baby a bottle, make sure she/he is hungry. Sometimes a baby wants to suckle for comfort, and that's not the time to try to introduce the bottle. Instead, try switching to a bottle during a breastfeeding session. That way, if it doesn't go well, you can put baby back on the breast and try switching to a bottle again later.

02

For infants from birth to two months old, a bottle may not be your best option to feed pumped breastmilk. Instead, you can use a plastic-tipped spoon, a medicine dropper, or a lipped cup.

03

A new breast milk bottle by nanobébé is receiving some strong buzz. Unlike the uniform baby bottle shape, the nanobébé breastmilk bottle has a (breast like) ergonomic shape to which the baby is meant to instinctively connect. The concave shape was bio medically engineered to spread the milk into a thin layer which warms at faster rates to protect nutrient damage while providing quick access to nutrition when baby is crying and hungry (a need fulfillment baby has grown accustomed to while breastfeeding). Pump often. When you are first transitioning your baby to a bottle, you might have to do what is called "triple" feeding: a combination of nursing, bottle feeding, and pumping.





04 You'll have more than enough milk supply to experiment with different feeding techniques and know that you're providing adequate nutrition.

05 If you're concerned that your baby isn't getting enough milk see your pediatrician immediately. Your baby's doctor will monitor her developmental progress, tracking growth parameters and troubleshooting before things get serious, which, for an infant, can sometimes happen in a matter of hours to days. If your pediatrician is not well versed on breastfeeding, find one that is.

06 Last, but not least, relax. "Don't be so hard on yourself. Mothering is hard enough without piling more stress on yourself." You're doing one of the most noble things imaginable—feeding your baby breastmilk—and you are rocking it! Let yourself be proud of yourself!

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About the author: Michelle Davis-Dash, MD is a mom of a son and a daughter, a board-certified pediatrician, and a medical contributor to various publications, and a MommyMD Guide. She resides in Baltimore, Maryland.

Doctor Spotlight

Michelle Davis-Dash

A beloved board-certified pediatrician and the mom of a son and a daughter, Dr. Michelle Davis-Dash shares her expertise and knowledge with parents by contributing to various publications, including the Mommy MD Guides website.

Dr. Davis-Dash understands that parenting requires hard work, dedication and endless attention to details. For this reason, when she is not writing, parenting or working as a doctor, she allows herself to recharge her batteries through reading and rest.

She lives in Baltimore, Maryland.

