



Formula Feeding

Some babies admitted to the Newborn care whose mother's intend to bottle feed will first require Intravenous therapy. If they are premature and not yet able to do suck feeds they will then progress to intra-gastric tube feeds and when mature enough move on to bottle feeds.

Even if you intend to use formula when you take your baby home, if he is at risk of developing a gastrointestinal condition known as Necrotising Enterocolitis (NEC) we will ask you to provide your baby with breast milk until he is mature enough to tolerate formula. These would typically be babies who weigh less than 1500gms or below 32 weeks gestation.

If you choose not to do this we will discuss the option of Pasteurised Human Donor Milk (PDHM) with you gaining formal consent from you prior to using it. When it is safe to do so your baby will be commenced on formula which may include a formula that contains extra calories if your baby is small or preterm.

Giving your baby a bottle

Gradually babies show signs that they are ready to bottle feed. These include the feeding cues mentioned earlier such as sucking on their hands, dummy/pacifier, or even their feeding tube. The nurse looking after your baby will show you how to give him a bottle safely until you are confident to do so on your own.

Initially your baby will only have enough energy or maturity to attempt one or two bottle feeds per day and sometimes he will start off very well and become sleepy for the next attempt. This is normal until your baby gets older and is closer to going home. When he is able to take all of his bottles in a 24 hour period and shows that he can do this for at least 48 consecutive hours he will be ready to go home. This will take several weeks as your baby has to learn how to co-ordinate breathing and sucking and swallowing safely and growing appropriately.