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When Feeding Skills Develop

Newborns have a natural suck reflex that helps them feed automatically during the first weeks of life. This reflex disappears as early as 8–12 weeks, as babies develop more control over their feeding skills. If your baby hasn't developed appropriate bottle-feeding skills before this reflex fades, they may struggle to accept bottles, even if they were previously taking one consistently.

2



Timing and Introduction

Delaying bottle introduction beyond 8–12 weeks increases the risk of refusal.

Ideal timing: To support successful bottle feeding while maintaining breastfeeding, introduce a bottle between 2–6 weeks, once breastfeeding feels established.

Ideal frequency: Offer a bottle at least once daily and up to 2–3 times per day to maintain familiarity and acceptance.

3



Don't Feed a Sleeping Baby

Offer bottles when your baby is awake and alert. A sleepy or sleeping baby may suck reflexively, but they aren't learning to drink from a bottle. Over time, this can cause confusion and may lead to refusal.

4



Plan Ahead

If the breastfeeding parent plans to return to work or spend time away, start bottle practice early. This gives your baby time to learn and adjust. Babies often accept bottles more easily from another caregiver, which can also give the breastfeeding parent valuable time for rest and self-care.

5



Preserve Your Milk Supply

If the breastfeeding parent plans to return to work or spend time away, start bottle practice early. This gives your baby time to learn and adjust. Babies often accept bottles more easily from another caregiver, which can also give the breastfeeding parent valuable time for rest and self-care.

If you'd like support regarding bottle feeding, our feeding team is here for you.

Schedule your appointment online, today!

