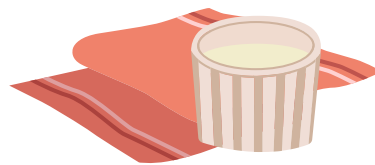


Maternity - patient information

What is cup feeding?

Cup feeding is a safe alternative way to feed your baby when they are unable to breastfeed or require additional fluids. Your baby can lap milk and control the pace of the feed themselves. History shows that humans have been cup feeding their babies of all ages for thousands of years.



How to cup feed

What you will need:

- a clean, open cup
- warmed* milk for the feed (half fill the cup and keep extra milk close by) **OR** directly hand express into the cup and feed this to baby
- a cloth or bib for dribbles (it can be messy),
- sit beside a table in a well-supported chair



Preparing expressed breastmilk

or visit:
www.breastfeeding.asn.au/resources/preparing-ebm

Holding your baby

- Ensure your baby is fully awake, alert and calm
- With the bib on your baby, hold them on your lap. Some people find it easier to wrap baby's arms to stop them knocking the cup – find what works for you and baby
- Holding baby upright, support their neck and shoulders
- Avoid lying your baby down in your arms, as this can increase the risk of choking



When would cup feeding be suitable?

Cup feeding may be suitable when:

- you are giving your baby small amounts of breastmilk or colostrum
- you and your baby are separated for some time
- your nipples need time to heal
- your baby is refusing to breastfeed
- your baby has a minor cleft of lip and/or palate
- you need to give top-ups of expressed breastmilk or formula
- you usually use bottles, but you cannot safely clean feeding equipment (for example, if you have no power or clean water). Cups are easier to clean than bottles and teats

Is there a special cup to use?

There is no need for a special cup. You can use any clean, open cup with a smooth surface. A small glass or plastic cup is ideal and easy to clean or dispose of, for example, a medicine cup or shot glass.

For babies from 6 months, straws or 'sippy' cups may be suitable – however they are harder to clean if you do not have access to hot water.

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Contact ddh_design@health.qld.gov.au for publishing information on this resource.



NSQHS Standard 2: Partnering with Consumers

We worked with our Darling Downs Health consumer group to create this resource for our communities.



**Queensland
Government**

Time to feed

- Bring the cup rim to lightly rest on baby's bottom lip, with the edges to the corner of their mouth.
- Slowly tip the cup to keep the milk at the rim, so the baby can lap or sip the milk with their tongue.
- Do not pour the milk into baby's mouth.
- Go slowly and let baby set the pace – they will have pauses - keep the cup in place and they will continue when ready.
- Feeding may take 20 to 30 minutes similar to an active breastfeed.
- When your baby is finished, they will pull away or close their mouth.

Note: Older babies may be able to feed from a straw or sip cup with supervision – find what works for your baby.

Cleaning

Clean the cup in hot soapy water, then rinse and dry it thoroughly. Store it in a clean container in the fridge for the next feed.



Cup-feeding in emergencies

or visit:
www.breastfeeding.asn.au/resources/cup-feeding-emergencies



Cup-feeding: Small baby series

or visit:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkhSJ16FHfY



References

1. Australian Breastfeeding Association, Cup-feeding, <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/resources/cup-feeding> [20/05/26]
2. International Breastfeeding Center, <https://ibconline.ca/> [20/05/26]
3. McKinney C, Glass R, Coffey P, Rue T, Vaughn M, Cunningham M, Feeding Neonates by Cup: A Systematic Review of the Literature, *Matern Child Health J.* 2016 Aug, 20(8):1620-33.