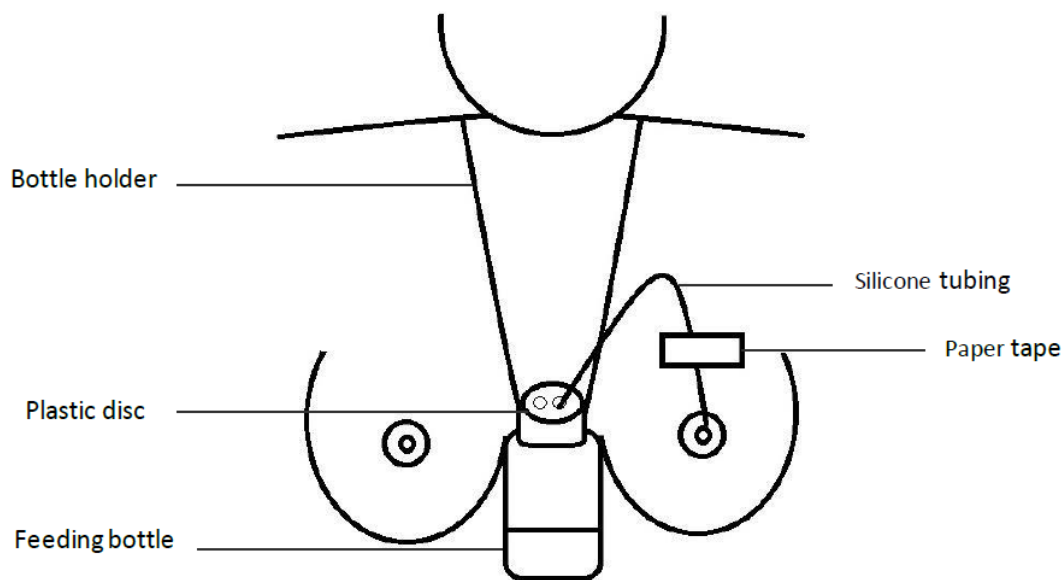


What is a breastfeeding supplementer?

A breastfeeding supplementer is a simple device you use to give your baby extra milk while feeding at your breast. It is a thin tube with one end attached near your nipple and the other in a bottle of either expressed breast milk (EBM) or infant formula. As your baby sucks, the milk will flow along the tube into their mouth.



To use a breastfeeding supplementer your baby must be willing and able to suck

Why might I need a supplementer?

- To give your baby extra milk to meet their nutritional needs.
- To encourage your baby to feed for longer at your breast.
- To get your baby used to breastfeeding again after a break.
- To stimulate your breast to make milk, or add to the milk you make, including:
 - when you have adopted your baby
 - after breast surgery involving your nerves and ducts.
- To avoid the need for a bottle with teat.

What equipment do I need?

You will need some milk you have expressed or some infant formula you have made up following the instructions on the container. We will give you the other things you need, including:

- 120ml feeding bottle
- 40cm silicone tubing
- plastic disc (4cm diameter) with 2 small holes
- paper tape (hypoallergenic so it won't irritate your skin)
- bottle holder
- 3ml syringe with plastic connector.

How do I use the breastfeeding supplementer?

Wash your hands well before touching the equipment.

Get the EBM/formula ready when your baby shows early signs they want to be fed (e.g. they may lick or smack their lips, open or close their mouth or suck on their lips, hands, fingers, toes or clothing).

1. Fill the bottle with the right amount of milk - your nurse, midwife or Lactation Consultant will talk about this with you.
2. Put the bottle of milk in the holder around your neck. The top of the bottle should be at the same level as your nipple.
3. You can increase the milk flow by raising the level of the bottle. If you lower the bottle, the milk flow will slow. When your baby sucks, they will draw milk through the tubing.
4. Encourage your baby to attach well to your breast for a feed as they usually would. Slip one end (approximately 1cm) of the tubing into the corner of your baby's mouth, pointing it slightly towards the roof of your baby's mouth. You can also put the tube under your nipple so that it is directly over your baby's tongue.
5. Put hypoallergenic paper tape on your breast to keep the tubing in place.

When your baby has finished feeding on your first breast, it is good to offer your second breast.

Feeding your baby from both breasts helps increase the amount of milk you make.

Using a breastfeeding supplementer at home



A breastfeeding supplementer can be introduced at the beginning or in the middle of a feed.

Introduce at the **beginning** of the feed:

- if you are not making milk or are only making a small amount
- if your baby gets tired quickly.

Introduce the supply line in the **middle** of the feed:

- when your baby is not swallowing any milk, or they are having long gaps between swallowing. By starting to use the supplementer at this stage of the feed, extra milk flowing through the tube will stimulate your baby to continue to suck strongly. This will help to provide extra sucking time and help you make more milk.

How do I clean the supplementer?

1. Clean the equipment after each feed. Take apart the equipment, rinse it in cold water, then wash all the equipment in warm, soapy water. Squirt warm, soapy water through the tubing with the syringe and plastic connector.
2. Rinse everything with clean, boiled water including the tubing using the syringe and plastic connector. Hang tubing to dry. The tube and cleaning syringe can be re-used for 24 hours. After this time, they will need to be replaced with new equipment.
3. Store your supplementer in a clean, air-tight container once it is dry.

When do I decrease or stop using the breastfeeding supplementer?

There is no rule for how long to use the supplementer. It will depend on why you are using it.

Check your baby to make sure they are getting enough milk. Look for things like how much weight they are gaining and how much urine they are passing. Your nurse, midwife or IBCLC will help you and work with you to decide how long you may need to use the supplementer.

It is likely your baby will be weaned off the supplementer over time. However, in some cases you may continue to use it for a long time.

Where can I get more information?

By phone or website

Maternal and Child Health (MACH) Service:

- call the Early Pregnancy and Parenting Support line on (02) 5124 1775
- visit our website at www.health.act.gov.au/MACH

[Australian Breastfeeding Association](#): 24 hour help line 1800 686 268 (services all of Australia)

This handout has been developed using information from the Tresillian QEII Family Centre

Acknowledgement of Country



Canberra Health Services acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people. Canberra Health Services respects their continuing culture and connections to the land and the unique contributions they make to the life of this area. Canberra Health Services also acknowledges and welcomes Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples who are part of the community we serve.



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