

Bottle Pacing for the Young, Breastfed Baby

Why do we pace while bottle-feeding?

The goal of pacing is to copy the mother's let-down pattern. A let-down is when milk flows. Mothers have several let-downs when breastfeeding. When the milk is flowing, the baby swallows. Between let-downs, the flow of milk slows and gives the baby a chance to rest for a few seconds.

This pattern of swallowing and resting is what you will want to loosely copy for bottle-feeding.

Some babies swallow 12 times before resting, while others swallow 25 times or more. It is important to find **your** baby's pattern.

To begin, count your baby's swallows

While your baby breastfeeds, count the number of times you hear your baby swallow. Stop counting when your baby stops swallowing and takes a rest. Record this number. This is cycle 1. Your baby will have many cycles in one feeding. For each new cycle, begin your count with number 1. Keep recording the number of swallows between rests until your baby is finished.

_____/rest/_____/rest/_____/rest/_____/rest/

_____/rest/_____/rest/_____/rest/ etc.

You will notice the number of swallows gets smaller after each rest as the feeding continues.

How to pace with a bottle:

After you have found your baby's swallow pattern, follow these steps.



Hold your baby semi-reclined, halfway between sitting up and lying down.

Rest the nipple on your baby's lips and wait for your baby to take the nipple in and begin to suck.



After your baby begins sucking, tip the bottle up so milk flows. Count your baby's swallows. When the number of swallows is about the same as cycle 1 of your let-down, your baby needs to rest.



Empty the nipple by tipping the bottle down and sitting the baby up.

Do not remove the nipple from your baby's mouth.

Babies stay latched during breastfeeding, and need to stay latched while bottle-feeding, too.



When your baby begins sucking again, tip the bottle back up so milk flows. Loosely follow the let-down pattern. Burp your baby mid-feed.

When your baby stops sucking, he or she is finished.

Change to cradle-hold

Once you and your baby have become comfortable with bottle pacing, try cradling your baby.



Choose a slower flow nipple if your baby:

- chokes, gulps, or looks worried
- guzzles without breathing

Choose a faster flow nipple if your baby:

- sucks 3 or more times between swallows
- tugs on the nipple

Say goodbye to pacing!

Babies often learn how to pace themselves. You are finished pacing when your baby feeds calmly and begins to pace himself or herself.