

# Finger Feeding

*This is an alternative feeding method that allows your baby to receive your breast milk without giving a bottle with a nipple. It is a temporary method that may help preserve your baby's ability to go back to the breast more easily.*

## Reasons to use this feeding method:

- No latch achieved in the first 24 hours
- Baby not latching regularly by 48 hours of age
- Baby's weight loss is excessive
- Baby's bilirubin level is high
- Baby is temporarily unable to feed at the breast

## What you need:

#5 french feeding tube attached to a 30cc syringe containing expressed breast milk or formula.

## How to feed baby:

1. Place your baby on a pillow on your lap with baby's head slightly raised.
2. Gently insert your finger with pad side up, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches into mouth (just past the first finger joint).
3. Make sure lips are flanged, ie rolled out like "fish lips."
4. When your baby starts sucking, press down on the tongue and remove your finger.
5. Lay the tubing along the pad side of your finger, with the tube's end even with the end of your finger.
  - If needed, tape the tube to your finger.
6. Re-insert your finger with tubing into your baby's mouth.
7. Keep your finger straight to flatten the tongue.  
Don't press your finger into the roof of your baby's mouth.
8. As your baby sucks, push the syringe plunger slightly.
9. You will feel milk pool in your baby's mouth.
10. After your baby swallows and resumes sucking, push the plunger again.
11. Another option is to remove the plunger from the syringe and allow gravity and/or your baby's suction to transfer the milk. If milk flows too fast, lower the syringe to the same level as your baby's head or lower. If it's too slow, raise the syringe higher.

Rinse tubing with clear water after feeding and air dry.

*Please note: This feeding method may seem overwhelming, but should take no longer than a breast feeding session. The problem is that you are likely doing this IN ADDITION to nursing that may not be going well! At least initially, someone besides Mom should finger feed baby, so Mom can pump. You and your breast feeding consultant can decide together how long you are able to continue this feeding method. It is always an option to switch over to a bottle, but hopefully your baby will soon learn to remove milk directly from the breast and thus eliminate the need for any other feeding method.*

