

BOTTLE REFUSAL

Bottle refusal is common and may take some time. Here are some tips that may help.



Helpful tips

- Try getting a family member or friend to give the bottle.
- Avoid giving the bottle when baby is upset or very hungry.
- Some babies may need to be distracted when first learning to feed from a bottle, such as walking around the room. Other babies may not like to be distracted and may need quiet and calm. See what works best for your baby.
- Use the tip of the bottle teat to tickle baby's upper lip and wait for them to open their mouth wide. This will help them to latch onto the teat like they would to a breast.
- Use the comfort of smell - some parents or care givers sleep with a burp cloth or use a worn t-shirt and then wrap it around your baby's bottle.
- Limit distraction like holding toys, light from the television or music playing (unless this works for your baby).
- If your baby is old enough try using a sippy cup.

Teats

Most babies should be able to feed from any type of teat - which is why there are so many kinds available. But for babies that might be having problems a standard teat shape (narrow neck, long teat) or a wide neck, longer teat is typically the best, as seen below.





Flow rates

- Different teats have different rates at which the milk flows. As your baby grows and gets familiar with sucking, they will likely prefer a faster flow teat.
- How tight you have screwed on the bottle lid can also affect the flow rate of milk. If too tight, the air can't enter the bottle and balance the pressure inside. This can make it hard for baby to suck milk out.



Milk temperature

- Some babies prefer warmed milk, others prefer room temperature or even cold milk.
- Always test the milk on the inside of your wrist to ensure it will not burn your baby's mouth.



Positioning

- Each baby is unique in their preferred feeding positions. Try holding your baby at an upright angle facing out to look around the room or sitting propped on your legs.
- Swaddling a wriggler baby may help.
- It's also a good idea to change the direction your baby is facing for part of the feed or at different feeds. This helps to stimulate your baby's senses equally.

If you have any concerns about your child, contact your local [Child and Family Health Nurse service](#), [Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Health Service \(AMIHS\)](#), [Building Strong Foundations \(BSF\) for Aboriginal Children, Families and Communities](#), or GP.



Health
Hunter New England
Local Health District



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Healthy Beginnings for HNEKids acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, live and gather, recognising their continuing connection to land, water and community.

We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging, as well as Aboriginal people who have provided valuable guidance to the development of this project.