

## Information for breastfeeding military mothers

# ***HELPING YOUR BREASTFED BABY ACCEPT A BOTTLE***



Sometimes a baby who is breastfed will refuse to take a bottle. This can be a very difficult situation when you are in the military and must be separated from your baby for many hours a day. This handout provides some suggestions to try when you need to get your breastfed baby to take a bottle.

### **Don't wait too long**

It's best to start offering a bottle at 3-4 weeks since you will be returning to duty at 6 weeks. This is long enough to establish breastfeeding, but not too long that your baby refuses the bottle completely.

### **Be consistent**

Offer the bottle once each day until you go back on duty. Some babies 'forget' how to take a bottle if they don't consistently get one each day.

### **Have someone else give the bottle**

Many breastfed babies won't take a bottle from you, they can smell you and your milk and know the 'real' thing is nearby. Have someone else give the bottle. You may even have to leave the room or house.

### **Try different times**

Try when your baby is sleeping, or drowsy. Some babies will take a bottle when they are hungry. Others do better when they have had a little eat already and are not starving.

### **Try different fluids**

Most babies like breastmilk, others prefer that the bottle has formula. You can try  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  as well.

### **Try different nipples**

Try a variety of nipples (shapes, sizes, flow rates and materials) until you find one your baby likes.

### **Warm it up/Cool it down**

Some babies like the fluid in the bottle to be warm, as it mimics breastmilk straight from the breast. Other babies like the fluid in the bottle to be cold (especially teething babies).

### **Try different positions**

Some babies will take a bottle in their usual nursing position. Others need to be in a totally different position. Try placing baby in your lap facing out with baby's back to your chest. You can also try propping baby on your slanted legs.

### **Try motion**

Some babies do better when they are moving. Try sitting in a rocking chair, or stand and sway back and forth. You can try using a sling or baby carrier and walk while offering the bottle.

### **Try a cup/spoon/eyedropper**

Skip the bottle and go straight to a cup. Use a small medicine cup or shot glass. You can also try an eyedropper. Older babies can use a sippy cup. Keep the baby upright, place the cup on baby's lips and let him sip or lap the milk. Allow the baby to control the feedings.

### **Give baby time to adjust**

Using a bottle is very different from the breast, be sure to give your baby time to adjust. Gently stimulate baby's mouth with the nipple and wait for him to open wide. Let him play with the bottle and taste the nipple. Do not force it.