



CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE

Breastfeeding: Finger feeding using a fine tube or syringe

This document should be read in conjunction with this [Disclaimer](#)

Step 9: Give no artificial teats or dummies to breastfeeding infants

Key points

1. Finger feeding is one alternative means of providing colostrum/EBM (not formula) to babies unable to attach and/or suck at the breast successfully or for babies who need supplementation of EBM. It is offered to a baby where a mother wishes to breastfeed.
2. Guide and support the mother for the first feed using this method, or until she is confident.

Equipment

1mL syringe, 10mL syringe or 5G feeding tube, subject to the volume to be given.

Procedure

1. Perform hand hygiene using soap and water. Ensure nails are short to prevent trauma.
2. Wrap the baby securely
3. Ensure the mother is in a comfortable position.
4. Support the baby with a pillow.
5. Whether a tube or syringe is used will depend on the volume of milk being offered. As a guide if volume is >10mL use a tube.
6. Using the index finger, encourage the mother to gently stimulate baby's lips until the baby opens his/her mouth- **finger pad uppermost**.
Allow the baby to begin sucking the mother's finger.
7. If using a tube: Insert the large end of tube into the bottle below the milk line
Ask the mother to gently insert tube alongside her finger to the fingertip and raise the bottle so that milk flows down the tube.
8. If using a syringe: The nozzle of the syringe should be gently inserted into the corner of the baby's mouth along the side of mother's finger and the plunger depressed slowly as the baby sucks.

9. Record the intake on the Care of the Well Neonate (MR 425.20).
10. If the baby is still being finger fed on discharge, ensure a follow up appointment has been made for the Breastfeeding Centre and an electric breast pump loan arranged.
 - Consider a Visiting Midwifery Service referral.

References


1. Watson GC. Supporting sucking skills. 2nd ed. Jones and Barlett Publishers. 2013: 212-213.
2. Kellams A, Harrel C, Omage S, Gregory C, Rosen-Carole C and the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine[ABM]. ABM Clinical Protocol #3: Supplementary feedings in the healthy term breastfed neonate, revised 2017. Breastfeeding Medicine Vol 12, Number 3, 2017.
3. Baby Friendly Health Initiative Australia Handbook for Maternity Services Step 9. pp. 33-34. Australian College of Midwives. 2016.

Related WNHS policies, procedures and guidelines

KEMH Clinical Guidelines: O&G: Newborn Feeding
 WNHS Breastfeeding Policy

Useful resources (including related forms)

Care of the Well Neonate MR 425.20

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