

# Using a lactation aid while breastfeeding

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## What is a lactation aid?



A lactation aid is a way to give extra nutrition (supplements) without bottle feeding.

It may be a container with a thin, flexible tube or a purchased system.

It may also be called a supplemental nursing system or SNS.

Supplements may be needed if your milk supply is delayed or when medically necessary for your baby's health. Your doctor, midwife, nurse or lactation consultant (LC) will explain why your baby needs supplements. Your own milk is the best supplement, but sometimes formula is needed.

A nurse or LC will show you how to use the lactation aid. When your baby nurses, he or she is getting milk from your breast and the tube. Your baby gets the extra nutrition he or she needs, while you both enjoy all the benefits of breastfeeding.

Your baby must latch on well at your breast to get all the nutrition he or she needs. Please ask your nurse or LC to help you get your baby latched on properly or to check your baby's latch.

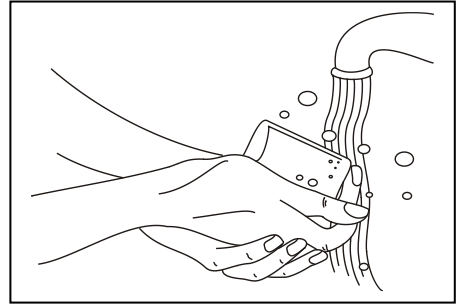
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## How do I use the lactation aid?

Wash your hands well before gathering the supplies you need.

To put together the lactation aid, you will need:

1. a small container
2. a #5 or #6 feeding tube, 36" (91cm) long
3. paper tape
4. scissors
5. a lid for the container (nipple with the hole cut larger or a lid with a hole)
6. a syringe for cleaning



### Using the lactation aid

1. Fill the container with the amount of supplement recommended by your health care provider.
2. If you are using a lid, thread tubing through it. Make sure the capped end of the tubing is open and placed in the bottom of the container. Tighten lid.
3. Place the container so it is at the level of your nipples.
4. Place the tip of the tubing on your nipple. Make sure it extends about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch (.6 cm) beyond your nipple. Tape the tube to your breast, not your nipple.

### OR

5. Latch your baby at the breast and then slide the tip of the tubing in into the corner of the baby's mouth, pointing towards the roof of the mouth. All three holes at the end of the tube need to be in your baby's mouth.
6. Once your baby is latched on well and is starting to suck, you should see the supplement coming up the feeding tube. The amount of supplement in the bottle will slowly decrease.
7. Raising the bottle makes the supplement flow faster and lowering the bottle slows the flow. You may need to adjust the height of the bottle to meet your baby's needs. Your health care provider will help you with this.

## Can I re-use the lactation aid?

This depends on your baby's health and the risk of infection:

- **If your baby is with you in the hospital**, you can wash and re-use the container. Use the tubing only once, then throw it away.
- **If your baby is in a Neonatal Nursery**, use a new lactation aid each time and discard it after use.
- **If your baby is at home**, you can re-use all the parts.

### How to clean the lactation aid at home

- Wash all parts with warm, soapy water. Use a syringe to flush (force water through) the tubing.
- Rinse the lactation aid several times with clean, warm water, until there is no more soap in the bottle or tubing.
- Put the parts on a clean towel to dry.
- The tube can be reused for 3 to 4 days.

If you buy a lactation aid (such as the "Lact-Aid" or Medela "Supplemental Nursing System") from the pharmacy, home health centre, or on-line, follow the cleaning directions on the package.

## How long do I need to use a lactation aid?

Every mom and baby's needs are different. Some women use it for a few days to several weeks. Others, who have adopted a baby or have had breast surgery, may use a lactation aid until they wean their baby.

Continue to use the breast pump after each feeding until your milk supply is well established and your baby is feeding well. Write down how much supplement your baby is taking from the lactation aid.

As your milk supply improves and your baby is breastfeeding well, the supplements may be gradually decreased.

## What follow-up care do I need?

The LC, midwife or public health nurse will:

- make sure that your baby gains enough weight
- watch and assess how well your baby is feeding
- help you wean your baby off the lactation aid, if possible







**If you have any questions or concerns,  
please talk with your  
Lactation Consultant, Nurse, Doctor or Midwife.**

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There are many people who can answer questions or help you with breastfeeding your baby.



Some choices are:

-  your doctor or midwife
-  a lactation consultant
-  nursing staff
-  a dietitian
-  a public health nurse
-  a La Leche League leader