

Giving the Bottle with Closeness to the Baby

Dear Parents,

Even if you are not breastfeeding, you can give your baby a lot of closeness and security. Breastfeeding is more than mere nutrition. It also provides comfort, body contact and reassurance and makes the development of a close bond between mother and child easier. As with breastfeeding, you can also strengthen this bond and consciously foster it while bottle-feeding. This information sheet is intended to help you do this.

Caring for the Baby

All babies – just like you – enjoy the language of love: eye contact and cuddling or “kangarooing” (skin-to-skin contact between baby and a parent). Love does not spoil anyone.

Enjoy snuggling and cuddling and make time for it.

There are a couple of things to keep in mind when bottle-feeding. You need a lot of *skin, eye and body contact* with your baby through which, the baby experiences security and closeness. Your baby will be calmer and more content and you can recover more easily from the effort of giving birth. Continuous rooming-in and bedding-in help you recognize your baby’s signals early and you can become attuned to each other more easily. In this way, you will become a specialist in your baby within a few days and will know exactly what he wants to communicate to you.

Always hold your baby in your arms during feedings and also when he is comfort sucking on a finger or a pacifier – or have him lie right next to your body. A baby sling or carrier is a big help in ensuring a lot of body contact. Let an experienced specialist help you, as needed, to find the appropriate carrier for you and show you how to use it.

We wish you all the best on your journey in life with your baby!



This slightly adapted recommendation appeared in the professional journal *Laktation und Stillen* 2/2013 with the kind permission of the WHO/UNICEF Initiative “Baby-Friendly Hospital” in Germany. This information sheet is exclusively for individual counseling and may only be given to individual mothers who are not breastfeeding.

Feeding

› Turn your baby towards you when feeding so that **eye contact** between you is easily possible. If your baby can see your face without having to turn his head, he will look at you more often and will also recognize your face sooner.

› **During feeding, change the side** on which you are holding the baby or have him lying next to you. The baby's eye-hand coordination is stimulated in this way.

› If possible, feed your baby in **skin-to-skin contact**. Wear a sleeveless t-shirt or unbutton your blouse/shirt. Skin contact stabilizes the baby's biological rhythms and he will gain better. When you carry your baby, make it possible for him to snuggle against your neck. Many individual scents are released there, which enable your newborn baby to recognize you again.

› By the way, your baby already knows the **Mama-scent** from the amniotic fluid. It gives him the feeling of security and he will happily snuggle with you.



Eye contact while feeding strengthens the parent-child bond.



This hungry baby is balling his fists and putting them into his mouth.

› **Feed your baby on demand.** After several weeks or months, children develop a predictable rhythm. A baby always needs food immediately when he is hungry. He signals you that he is unhappy even before he begins to cry. When he is hungry, he begins to move his lips and ball his fists, sometimes even when his eyes are still closed. He makes small mewling sounds. Only when this is not successful will he begin to cry loudly..

› **Don't let your baby cry.** It's more comfortable for everyone if you react to his signals right away.

› **At the beginning of the feeding, touch your baby's lips with the nipple or your finger** and wait until the baby draws in the nipple himself. Don't shove the nipple into his mouth against his will! Make sure the nipple has a small hole. Feedings should last around 20 minutes in the first weeks. Babies are sometimes more and sometimes less hungry and they don't always take the same amount. They are called "nurslings" because they must nurse (suckle). Sucking contributes to calming them, stabilizes the airways and promotes digestion. Let your baby continue to suck on a finger or a pacifier. Take him into your arms as he does this. The feeling of being secure in Mama's or Papa's arms, helps your baby to adapt to life outside the uterus./

At the beginning of the feeding, the mother touches the baby's lips.



Now the baby is ready for the bottle and opens his mouth wide.