

Choosing a Bottle Nipple

Consider Length and Shape

Length and shape affect how your baby latches on the nipple.

- Choose a rounded nipple. The round shape helps your baby's tongue cup the nipple and maintain a stronger suck.
- A nipple with a gentle slope from the nipple tip to the nipple base helps baby maintain a deep latch and flared lips.
- Choose a nipple texture that your baby can compress and get fluid out of easily. If it's too stiff, it may take longer and require more effort. If it's too soft, it may collapse and require your baby to frequently break its latch and suck.



Good latch (deep and lips flared out)



Poor Latch (shallow and lips tucked in)



Consider Nipple Flow Rate

Bottle companies advertise their nipple flow rates in various ways. Some companies list flow rates **by age** (e.g. 0-3 months, 3-6 months, etc.) or by **flow speed** (i.e. "slow", "medium" or "fast" flow). There is a **lot of variability** between bottles, brands and types of nipples.

How do I know if I'm using the right nipple flow?

Too Slow	Best Fit	Too Fast
<p>The nipple flow may be too slow if your baby is showing signs of stress such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sucking so hard that the nipple collapses flat.• Shows disinterest• Not getting much milk and becoming frustrated.• Usually takes more than 30 minutes to finish a bottle. If this is the case, you should see a feeding therapist for an assessment.• Falls asleep before finished feeding.	<p>You can tell you have chosen the best nipple flow when your baby:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can keep up with breathing and swallowing without coughing, choking, or spilling milk from their mouth.• Is actively sucking, awake, relaxed and able to finish bottle feed within 15-30 minutes.• Not showing signs of stress.	<p>The nipple may be too fast if your baby is showing signs of stress such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spilling milk from their mouth.• Coughing, choking, gulping, or spitting up.• Loosening their latch or clamping their lips on the nipple.• Has trouble or works hard at breathing while feeding and may have noisy breathing.• Eye brows are raised, neck/head is arched, fingers are spread out.

Common Bottle / Nipple systems with flow rates listed from slowest to fastest

Flow Category	Nipple Brand and Type	
Extra Slow	Philips Avent Natural First Flow Philips Avent Natural (0+ months) nfan Labs Extra Slow Dr. Brown's UltraPremie	<i>Note: This list provides some examples. Brands may change.</i>
Slow	nfan Labs Slow Dr. Brown's Premie Playtex Ventaire Full Sized Playtex Ventaire Breastlike Similac single-use Slow Flow Dr. Brown's Transition (0+ months) Playtex Baby Naturalatch (0-3 months) Comotomo Slow Flow (0-3 months) nfan Labs Standard	
Medium	Enfamil single-use Slow Flow Gerber First Essentials Dr. Brown's Level 1 (0+ months) Dr. Brown's Level 1 wide neck Evenflo Classic Slow Flow (0+ months) MAM Anti-colic Omos + Dr. Brown's Level 2 (3+ months) NUK Wide Slow Flow (0-6 months) Tommee Tippee Closer to Nature (0+ months) Tommee Tippee Anti-colic (0+ months)	References: Pados BF, Park J, Dodrill P. Milk flow rates from bottle nipples used in the hospital and after discharge. <i>Advances in Neonatal Care</i> . 2018; 19 (1): 32-41.
Fast	Philips Avent Anti-colic (0+ months) Similac single-use Standard Flow Enfamil single-use Standard Flow Similac single-use Premature Medela Wide-Base Slow Flow	Pados BF, Park J, Thoyre SM, Estrem H, Nix WB. Milk flow rates from bottle nipples used after hospital discharge. <i>MCN Am J Matern Child Nurs</i> . 2016; 41 (4): 237 - 243.
Very Fast	Medela Calma	

If you need more support choosing a nipple or feeding your baby, please talk to your care team.

This document is for general public use. Families caring for fragile feeders (e.g. babies who are born premature, have feeding difficulties, or have a complex medical history) should always consult their pediatrician and feeding therapist with questions or concerns regarding their child's feeding plan and routine.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at **811**.