



# NUTRITION TIPS

## Nipple Confusion

Nipple confusion, also called a bottle preference, arises when a breastfed baby is given an artificial rubber or silicon nipple and must try to learn to nurse from both his mother's breast and the bottle nipple.

In breastfeeding, the baby needs to take as much of the nipple and areola into his mouth as possible to pump the milk from the milk ducts. In bottle feeding, he uses his lips to grip the tip of an artificial nipple.

In breast feeding, the baby must

place his tongue beneath the nipple and use it to help create the vacuum needed for nursing, to pump and swallow the milk. In bottle feeding, the baby must place his tongue in front of the nipple to stop the flow of milk while he swallows.

### Signs of Nipple Confusion.

Babies are born knowing how to suck, but different techniques are needed to get milk from a breast and a bottle. Nipple confusion can lead to severe problems of sore nipples, breast engorgement, a slowdown in weight gain or baby refuses to nurse. This confusion can lead



to diminished or discontinued nursing.

In general, breastfeeding requires more vigorous mouth and tongue motions, and greater muscle coordination than bottle feeding. Your baby uses 40 facial muscles to nurse effectively when breast feeding and only four to suck on a bottle

### Dealing With Nipple Confusion.

The baby who exhibits nipple confusion knows exactly what he or she wants - the nipple that produced the most milk with the least effort - i.e. artificial nipple. The baby therefore gets frustrated at the breast because the milk doesn't start to flow immediately.

Try expressing some milk onto your nipple and onto baby's lips as you hold him. Try offering the breast when baby isn't particularly hungry or when he is feeling sleepy. He might have more patience and continue sucking until the milk lets down.

### Avoiding Nipple Confusion.

During breastfeeding, a baby's tongue, jaw and mouth work together in a co-ordinated rhythm. This unique sucking action is one reason why breastfed babies generally have better oral development than bottle - fed babies.

Avoid offering your baby a bottle before he is 12 weeks of age. Avoid pacifiers too. Where supplements are medically required, before baby is 4 weeks of age, feed with medicine cup, spoon and bowl.



► *For more information on child nutrition*

Visit the Olu Akinkugbe  
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#### Visiting Hours:

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