



Australian
Breastfeeding
Association

English
2011

Fact Sheet *The Complementary Feed*

The Complementary Feed

Giving your baby artificial baby milk will make him less hungry for breastmilk and may reduce your milk supply. If this is necessary for medical reasons, you can still rebuild your milk supply by more frequent breastfeeding (see Fact Sheet *Increasing your Supply*). Offer the breast for comfort sucking.

- A complementary feed can be expressed breastmilk or artificial baby milk.
- Always breastfeed first, offering both breasts. Change sides several times during the feed and then offer both breasts again as a top-up feed 20-30 minutes later. Then offer the complementary feed only if necessary.
- Offer expressed breastmilk (or artificial baby milk) in a medicine glass or a small cup, rather than from a bottle which needs a different sucking action.
- To start with, try offering the complementary feed only after the evening feed or at least not after every feed. However, this will depend on how low your milk supply has become.
- Offer only as many complementary feeds as your baby needs without encouraging him to take more.
- Express about an hour after a breastfeed and save your milk to use as a complement later.

How do I tell if my milk supply is increasing?

All or some of the following may occur:

- A feeling of fullness in the breasts.
- Your let-down reflex happens more quickly and the milk flows more easily.
- Leaking of milk.
- Your baby will have more wet nappies.
- Your baby continues to gain weight.
- Your baby may take less of the complementary feed.

How do I stop the complementary feed and go back to full breastfeeding?

- If you are giving a complementary feed after every breastfeed, try offering less often. When you choose to skip the complementary feed, choose a feed when your baby seems satisfied with breastmilk alone. Be prepared to feed your baby sooner than he might normally ask for the next feed.
- Late afternoon/evening complementary feeds are usually the hardest ones to stop.

REMEMBER — BREASTFEED ON BOTH SIDES, REST A WHILE, BREASTFEED AGAIN AND ONLY THEN OFFER THE COMPLEMENTARY FEED IF NECESSARY.

Further Reading

- Fact sheet *Increasing Your Supply*.

For more information contact your Child Health Centre or the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA).

**Breastfeeding Helpline
1800 mum 2 mum**

1800 686 268

The ABA Breastfeeding Helpline is available 7 days a week and is staffed by trained volunteer breastfeeding counsellors.

If you need help making phone calls in English, ring the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450.

Email counselling and more information is available at www.breastfeeding.asn.au