



### **IMPORTANT**

· Finger feeding with a feeding tube is only a temporary way to give your baby some extra milk in the early days after birth, if the baby is unable to extract milk from the breast.

· The milk of choice is your own expressed breast milk. If you are unable to get enough expressed breast milk, you may need to use some commercial formula, as well.

# **Breastfeeding**

## **Finger Feeding Your Baby with a Feeding Tube**

### **Finger feeding is used:**

- To encourage a baby to develop a suck/swallow pattern which is similar to breastfeeding.
- To temporarily give the baby some milk while the baby is learning to breastfeed.

### **Getting ready:**

- Wash your hands; clip nail short.
- Gather the supplies you will need:
  - expressed breast milk or formula in a container, warmed to room temperature
  - 15" #5 French feeding tube; 12 ml. syringe
  - tape

### **Using the feeding tube:**

- Draw up 12 ml. of milk into the syringe; attach feeding tube to the syringe. Fill the tube with milk by pushing on the barrel of the syringe.
- Tape the opposite end of the feeding tube on the side of your index finger even with the tip of your finger; use the largest finger possible to encourage the baby to open wide.
- Hold your baby in your arms in the cradle position.
- Using the taped finger touch the baby's upper lip to encourage the baby to open his/her mouth wide and reach for the milk.
- With the pad of your finger turned upward, slide the finger to the roof of the baby's mouth. The baby's tongue will touch the nail bed of the finger as the baby sucks. Do not rub your finger on the roof of the baby's mouth.
- If the baby does not initiate sucking, you may need to use the barrel of the syringe to push a drop of milk from the tube in order to stimulate the baby's sucking and feeding.
- As the baby is sucking, the plunger of the syringe will move into the barrel; you may need to gently

push on the plunger if the baby is not able to draw it down by himself/herself. Ensure that the baby is sucking before putting the gentle pressure on the plunger. The plunger should be dropping slowly—approximately .2 ml./suck.

- It should take 15-20 minutes, or less, for the baby to take one ounce, or 30 ml, of the milk.

**Cleaning the feeding tube:**

- Wash the tube with hot water and dish soap and rinse with hot water, after every feed, using the syringe to push the water through the tube.
- Push air through the tube and hang to dry.
- Take the syringe apart.
- Store the tube and syringe in a clean container.
- Use a new tube and syringe every 24 hours.

Adapted with permission from:  
Breastfeeding Committee for Saskatchewan  
Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region