



SimpliFed

# Combo Feeding Care Plan

# What is Combo/Combi or Mixed Feeding?

We know about 35% of babies are supplemented with formula while breastfeeding per the CDC. This type of feeding is typically referred to as “Combo Feeding”, “Combi Feeding”, or “Mixed Feeding” and defined as feeding a baby any amount of breastmilk and infant formula. However, this looks different for every family. Combo feeds may happen through the occasional bottle, top ups, or as the majority of infant nutrition. It is completely dependent on the needs of the family.



## Do I Have to Combo Feed?

Short answer: no. Families choose to combo feed for different reasons. Some of these reasons include:

- Medical necessity
- Concerns with milk production
- Painful latching
- Giving the parent(s) a break from feeding
- Parental separation from baby
- Relactation process
- Because the parent chooses to

There is not one “right” way to feed your baby. It is whatever works for you and your family.

## Choosing What to Use When Combo Feeding

Until your baby is 1 year old, their main source of nutrition should be breastmilk or formula. If you are choosing to combo feed, you have a few different options.



### Expressed Breast Milk

Choosing to express your breast milk and provide it to your baby is a great option. Frequent milk removal helps support milk production. Expression sessions can occur 1x/day, a few x/day, after every feeding, or instead of feeding at the breast. Whatever is the easiest and most feasible option for you.



### Donor Milk

Donor milk is an option that can be considered. Weighing the risks and benefits of each feeding choice may help you to choose. Formal and informal milk sharing through milk banks, friends/families, and communities is becoming increasingly popular. Due to the benefits that donor milk has.



### Infant Formula

Infant formula is the most regulated food product on the market. It has been created to meet the nutritional needs of babies. This regulation is overseen by the FDA under the Federal Food and Drug and Cosmetics act (FFDCA). These regulations are outlined in [section 412 of the FFDCA in the 21 CFR 106 and 107](#). What this regulation ensures is that all infant formulas that are marketed in the US are required to meet a minimum amount of 29 essential nutrients. These nutrients include sources of protein, fats, carbohydrates, and a variety of vitamins and minerals. You can read more about what is in Infant Formula [HERE](#).

# How Do I Know If My Baby Is Hungry?

Did you know your baby will actually tell you when they are hungry? Long before they can even talk! These are called hunger cues. These cues signal to parents and caretakers that their baby is hungry or thirsty! Knowing these cues allows you to be able to respond quicker and more effectively to baby's hunger. When you are able to respond earlier, feedings tend to be much easier and less stressful.

What do they look like?

- REM sleep cycle
- Sticking their tongue out
- Hands to face and mouth
- Opening mouth and smacking lips
- Rooting/Mouthing (searching for something to latch onto with their mouth)
- Wriggling
- Stretching
- Staring
- "Ooh face"
- Sucking
- Crying



# How Do I Know If My Baby is Getting Enough?

## Weight

Initial weight loss (under 7% of birth weight) in the first few days is common. If it exceeds this, your provider and care team will help to develop a plan to continue to support you and your baby. **Continued weight gain is a good sign!**

## Growth

Baby growing **longer** and their head **larger** is a good sign!







## Frequency

Baby is eating at least **8x/day**.

## Diapers

<div>● Day 1</div> <div>1 wet, 1 dirty</div>	<div>● Day 2</div> <div>2 wet, 2 dirty</div>	<div>● Day 3</div> <div>3 wet, 3 dirty</div>
<div>● Day 4</div> <div>4 wet, 3 dirty</div>	<div>● Day 5</div> <div>5 wet, 3 dirty</div>	<div>● Day 6</div> <div>6 wet, 3 dirty</div>

# How Long Does Milk Last?

	 Breastmilk	 Formula
 <b>Room Temperature</b> Temperature: 77°F	Freshly Pumped: Up to 4 hours Thawed: 1-2 hours	2 hours
 <b>Refrigerator</b> Temperature: 40°F	Freshly Pumped: Up to 4 days Thawed: Up to 1 day	Up to 1 day
 <b>Freezer</b> Temperature: 0°F	6 months is best; Up to 12 months is acceptable <b>Never</b> freeze after thawing	Do not freeze and reheat

## Choosing a Bottle

There are so many bottles to choose from. When it comes down to it — use what you have available and what your baby is willing to take. However, if you have the ability to prepare before offering the bottle — there are a few different things to look for in a bottle.

**Slow Flow:** When you are bottle feeding and breastfeeding there is a difference in the flow of the milk. When your baby is nursing at the breast, they have to work to elicit a letdown. Versus with a bottle, the milk can just come out without any stimulation. Commonly this is referred to as nipple confusion. In reality, it is really just a flow preference. By mimicking the flow at the breast, your baby will be less likely to decline either of the feeding methods!

**Nipple Shape:** When your baby latches onto the breast, they are able to latch onto the area behind the nipple and on the areola. To mimic that latch, the trick is to find a bottle with a wide base and gradual slope. This also helps keep the baby from latching onto the bottle nipple like a straw- which could lead to them doing the same on you! Which could end in painful latches.



## Preparing Infant Formula

Did you know that powdered infant formula is not sterile? It is advised to boil water when preparing. However, this is not only because of ensuring the water is safe but because bacteria can exist in the powder directly from the manufacturer! Additionally, we run the risk of cross contamination when reaching in for the scoop! By properly preparing powdered infant formula you can reduce risk of illness. Watch a video [here](#)!

**Step 1:** Start with a clean surface and clean hands. This helps to avoid cross contamination

**Step 2:** Boil the appropriate amount of water. You can refer to the powdered formula can for measurements and guidelines. Remember, you are boiling the water- so you may lose some to evaporation. You may want to boil more water than necessary.

**Step 3:** Determine the amount of powdered infant formula needed. Again, check the can for measurements! The amount will change with each child and their age.

**Step 4:** Add boiled water and powdered infant formula to the bottle. The water should be no cooler than 158°F when mixing.

**Step 5:** Mix and shake!

**Step 6:** Allow the bottle and its contents to cool to a safe feeding temperature. When the powdered infant formula is added, the water cools a bit. However, it will need to be cooled a bit longer. You can do this by waiting it out or running cool water over the bottle. To test the temperature, use the inside of your wrist to drip some of the formula. Once cooled, you can dry the outside of the bottle if needed.

**Step 7:** Pace feed your baby!

#### Some things to keep in mind:

- You should never use a microwave to warm bottles. This can create hot spots which can burn your baby.
- Never prop a bottle while feeding. The time spent during feeding helps support your baby's development as well as your responsiveness to their cues.
- Any formula not consumed within 2 hours of beginning the feed should be disposed of. This way you can avoid bacterial growth.

## Paced Feeding

Anytime a bottle is being fed, the paced feeding method should be used. This method allows your baby to be in charge of the feeding. This mimics the way milk flows from the breast, making it easier to go to and from breast and bottle. While also avoiding overfeeding and the troublesome tummy issues that come with it.

### Paced Feeding – Step by Step

- Use a nipple with a slow flow
- Hold the bottle in a position that is almost parallel to the floor without filling the nipple with milk
- Rub the nipple along the baby's lips to encourage them to latch onto the bottle nipple
- Baby should latch onto the bottle nipple past the narrow part so that their lips are near the collar of the bottle
- Allow the baby to latch and suck on the bottle nipple for a few seconds without milk filling the nipple
- Slowly tilt the bottle so that the narrow part of the nipple fills with milk
- After 3-5 swallows or about 30 seconds, tilt the bottle back down to slow the flow and give the baby a break
- If baby unlatches, let them root for the nipple
- Feedings should take about 15-30 minutes If the baby begins to drink too fast, you can tilt the bottle down or pull the bottle away to slow down the feeding
- You can also break the bottle into increments and burp in between to keep the pace
- Once baby is showing signs of being full like not sucking between breaks, turning or pushing away, you can end the feeding



# Things to Consider when Combo Feeding

- No matter the amount, breast milk is beneficial for as long as it is provided. If choosing to combo feed allows you to provide your baby breastmilk longer, then this can be a benefit!
- Utilizing combo feeding in your feeding journey can give peace of mind throughout production concerns, weight concerns, and damaged nipples healing time.
- If you are wanting to sustain your breast milk production while combo feeding, you will need to continue to express milk as you have been. This can be done keeping in sync with the amount of times your baby gets a supplement with the amount of times you are expressing milk.
- If you are wanting to increase your milk production, you will need to continue to stay in sync with your typical expression schedule. As well as adding additional expression sessions.
- If you do not continue to express breastmilk as you have been, it can have a negative effect on your breast milk production. If you go longer between emptying your breasts, this sends signals to your body to slow down milk production. As well as increase your risk for clogged ducts (ductal narrowing) or mastitis.
- If your baby has not had supplementation prior to this, they may need some time to transition to the feeding method (i.e. bottle- you can read more [here](#) about choosing a bottle) or the feeding supplement (i.e. expressed milk, donor milk, formula milk).
- You should still continue to follow your baby's [hunger cues](#).
- Anytime a bottle is used, regardless of contents, you should be using the [paced feeding method](#) (video [here](#)).
- Try to be consistent with your routine of offering a supplement. For instance, if you are supplementing one feed, offer it at the same time each day. If it is a top up after feeds, always offer breast first.
- Offering large volumes of milk prior to bedtime is not proven to make babies sleep longer. It does increase the risk of SIDS.

## Remember

It is understandably difficult to have to change your feeding plans. You have to meet your child's needs at the moment. If that includes supplementation, you are doing the best to care for your child. If combo feeding was not part of your long term plan, that is ok! Just because you use the supplementation now, does not mean that you will have to use it forever. You are getting the care and support to reach your goals.

