



20 WAYS TO GET YOUR BABY TO ACCEPT A BOTTLE

S O F I E P E T T S - S A B I N E



S H U T E Y E

Much like sleep training there isn't an exact science to getting a baby to accept milk from a bottle straight away. The key to success is based on perseverance on your part, coupled with some weird and wonderful techniques and catching your baby at the right moment.

Whether you're returning to work or just want a break from feeding, here are 20 of my most successful tips and tricks to help you get your baby to accept a bottle.

1. Have Dad/Partner or a confident relation or friend give the bottle initially. This will avoid any confusion and frustration as to why you're not giving them your breast.
2. Try feeding them in exactly the same environment/room as you would breastfeed or try in a completely different environment depending on how they react.
3. Also, try feeding in the same position as that in which your baby would breastfeed or switch to a different position if that frustrates or confuses them. Perhaps something more upright.
4. Babies can get distracted if the TV is on whilst you breastfeed so use this distraction to slip in the bottle.
5. Your baby might be more willing to accept the first few sips if you're walking/rocking/moving!
6. Firstly, offer the bottle when you know your baby has a good appetite. Perhaps the first feed of the day or last feed before bedtime.

7. Or, if that doesn't work, offer the bottle when they aren't desperately hungry. The hunger could exacerbate their frustration and making them even more unwilling to give it a go.
8. It goes without saying but try lots of different teats. Some let the milk out very slowly which could be frustrating and some allow a faster flow, which might be preferable, or vice versa. There are teats that are longer or have wider bases and they come in a variety of shapes so you can try and find one a similar shape to your nipple.
9. On the other hand, the idea of a pretend nipple might just be too much for them to handle. Instead you can ditch a bottle and offer a free flow sippy cup instead. Find one with handles that they can hold on to as your baby may prefer to take control.
10. If you're returning to work and your baby is refusing to drink out of the bottle from their carer they may go on hunger strike! Try not to worry as you can cluster feed them when you get home. Ask the carer to try feeding a few ounces with a spoon or dropper. This can be a great start to the transition.
11. If your baby does go on a hunger strike then the carer could try feeding with a bottle when they're semi asleep and not as aware. They can then get used to it gradually with this 'stealth' feeding technique.
12. If your baby refuses the bottle it's best to not offer them the breast immediately afterwards as they will learn to just keep on refusing as the preferred boob is just around the corner.

13. Putting some diluted apple juice in the bottle at first might spark an initial interest more than milk (as long as they're old enough).
14. Smile! Gaze into your baby's eyes and give them a big old grin. If they're engaged with you that might not notice the bottle sneaking in!
15. Temperature: try warming it to the same temperature as breast milk, or having it slightly cooler.
16. Some babies are fussy if the breastmilk has been frozen previously as it can alter the taste.
17. Going back to work? Give yourself a couple of weeks before you return to nail the feeding transition.
18. Just like with sleep training, you're creating new habits so if you offer the bottle daily with consistency, your baby will soon become familiar with it and more likely to warm to it. Just because they've rejected it once doesn't mean that it will always be a 'no'. Keep going :)
19. If you experience some hunger strikes, check for signs of dehydration; make sure there are plenty of wet nappies and the urine is clear.
20. Be cool mama!!! Our little ones are super sensitive to the emotions of their parents and if you get frustrated or stressed out that they're not eating, they'll pick up on it and are more likely to carry on refusing.

You've got this!

Sofie x