



## FEEDING BABIES WITH CLEFT PALATE



1. **Always feed your baby in an upright position, whether it is from the breast or cup.**
2. **Burp your baby every 5 minutes.**
3. **Keep your baby upright or seated for 20 – 30 minutes after each meal.**
4. **Your baby should drink 2 oz. of milk for every half kilogram of weight.** For example, if the baby weighs 4 kilograms, s/he should drink 16 oz. daily.
5. **Feed your baby in small and frequent doses.** Limit feeding time to 30 minutes.
6. **Position the nipple in the baby's mouth where there is no cleft or hole.** A pacifier will help the baby develop skills needed for feeding before his or her surgery.
7. **After the meal, clean your baby's mouth and nose with a soft damp cloth.**
8. **Pay attention to stress signs.** Signs can be strong actions, such as coughing or choking during the meal or kicking out and widely stretching the arms and legs. Stress signs can also be less obvious, like difficulty breathing or changes in the breathing pattern while drinking, fingers widely stretched out, or bringing the fingers to the mouth. If your baby shows some stress signs during the meal, give him some time until he looks like he is ready to start again. If your baby shows stress signs during every meal, bring him to the doctor.
9. **If using a bottle, try to use a softer nipple and bottle, so you can control the flow of liquid.** You can boil both items to make them softer. If your baby still has difficulty sucking milk from the bottle, you can cut the ole of the nipple into a small X. Be careful not to let the X or hole rip over time, causing it to get too large.

Dr. Catherine Crowley, CCC-SLP, J.D., Ph.D., [crowley@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:crowley@tc.columbia.edu); Miriam Baigorri, CCC-SLP, [mb2198@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:mb2198@tc.columbia.edu)  
Designed by Tina Yeung, Graduate Clinician; 2013

PROGRAM IN SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY  
TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY