

Feeding in Cleft Lip & Palate

- **Why do cleft lip & palate babies have problems with feeding?**

Generally, cleft lip and palate children have problem in feeding due to the structural and functional abnormality of the oral cavity:

- 1) In cleft lip, it is hard for the baby to make a good seal around the nipple.
- 2) In cleft palate, it is hard for the baby to make a good suction due to the opening at the roof of the mouth.

- **How to feed a cleft lip baby?**

- **Breast feeding:**

During breast feeding, the soft tissue of the breast will fill the opening of the mouth creating a good seal for the baby to get enough suction; however, feeding position should be modified to an upright position to give the needed jaw and chin support.

- **Bottle feeding:**

While bottle feeding choose special nipples with wider base. Similar to breast feeding, use an upright position and try keeping the nipple centered in the baby's mouth

- **How to feed cleft palate baby?**

While breastfeeding it is highly recommended to express your milk using special nipples.

- **How often does my baby to be feed?**

During first month, baby needs to be feed 8 to 12 times per day every (2 – 3 hours). At 2 – 4 months, baby needs to be feed 6 – 8 times per day (every 3 – 4 hours).

- **How do I know if my baby gaining enough weight?**

A baby usually loses weight during the first week of his/her life. The loss is about 10% of the baby's weight. Your baby should regain this weight by 2 weeks of age.

References: Cleft Lip & Palate Association, Cleft Palate foundation.