

Cleft Care: Cleaning feeding equipment

Why cleaning and sterilising matters

Babies under 12 months are more likely to get infections. Cleft feeding bottles have extra parts, like valves and vents. Milk can get stuck in these small parts.

If bottles are not cleaned well:

- germs can grow
- valves may stop working properly
- reeding may become harder for your baby.

Careful cleaning and sterilising:

- lowers the risk of tummy bugs and infections
- keeps the bottle working as it should
- helps feeding stay safe and predictable.

Clean the bottle as soon as possible after each feed

Step 1: Take it apart

Pull the bottle completely apart, including:

- bottle
- teat
- valve
- any vent pieces.

Step 2: Rinse

Rinse all parts in cold or lukewarm water.



Quick checklist:

- Check bottle parts every day
- Clean every part after every feed
- Sterilise all parts for babies under 12 months
- Cold water sterilising is gentle on bottle parts
- Store bottles clean, dry, and covered

Step 3: Wash

- wash in warm water with dishwashing liquid
- use a bottle brush for the bottle
- use a small brush for valves and grooves
- a toothpick can help clean small spaces.

Step 4: Rinse again

Rinse all parts well in clean water.

Step 5: Air dry

- place parts on a clean drying rack or towel
- do not wipe dry
- make sure all parts are fully dry before storing.

Sterilise all bottle parts after cleaning

Sterilising bottles is recommended for babies under 12 months.

Cold water sterilising is preferred because it is gentle on the valves. When using the cold water sterilising method, make sure you:

- use a sterilising solution made for baby bottles
- follow the instructions on the product
- leave items in the solution for at least 15 minutes
- remove with clean hands or clean tongs
- store in a clean, dry container.

You can also use:

- an electric steam steriliser
- a UV steriliser
- a dishwasher (top rack only if parts are dishwasher safe)
- microwave steam bags.



Use microwave steam bags with caution. Some bottle valves can be affected by high or uneven heat. Steam can also cause burns if opened too quickly. If you choose to use microwave steam bags:

- follow instructions exactly
- let the bag cool before opening
- check bottle parts regularly for damage.

Before the next feed

- check valves and teats for cracks, stretching, or stiffness
- replace any part that looks damaged
- make sure all parts are clean, dry, and put together correctly.

Cleft Care team contacts

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