



# Dangers and risks of bottle propping

## What is bottle propping?

Bottle propping is an alternative to holding a bottle for a baby. It consists of positioning a baby so they can eat hands-free while a bottle is propped up. As this is done before babies can hold their own bottle, this practice can be dangerous, even if it is done just for a short time.

### Choking

This is the most dangerous risk associated with bottle propping. At first, a baby might feed with no issue. However, bottle propping can lead to a steady flow of milk from the bottle's nipple, which might continue to flow even after the baby stops sucking.

### Ear infections

Laying a baby flat while bottle propping can cause milk to collect near the opening of the eustachian tube. If the tube cannot drain well during a cold, this can trigger a painful ear infection.

### Tooth decay

As milk pools in the back of a baby's mouth rather than flowing down their throat, there is a greater risk of tooth decay as the milk stays in the mouth for longer.

### Interrupted bonding time

A baby bonds with its parents and caretakers whilst being held during feedings. Bottle propping takes away this bonding time.

# Tips for safely bottle-feeding

- Keep your baby's head in a semi-upright position. Don't lay your baby flat in your arms, as this causes milk to pool in the back of their mouth. Your baby's head should always remain higher than their feet.
- Pay attention to your baby during feedings, so you'll know when they've finished eating or fallen asleep. Remove the bottle to prevent choking.
- Don't forget to burp your baby every 5 minutes or so during feedings, or approximately after every 3-ounce portion they drink. This can help prevent gas and spitting up, though not all babies will burp this often.
- If your baby is new to bottle-feeding, consider starting with a slow flow nipple to prevent gagging.

**Bottle propping might seem like a safe, convenient way to feed your baby, but it's risky. The correct way to feed your baby is by holding them with their head upright.**

For more information, visit <https://www.healthline.com/health/baby/bottle-propping>