

Use of soft bottles and teats at CoRSU by babies with a cleft

1. Do you give a bottle and teat to every baby with a cleft lip and palate?
No, there are babies who from our assessment the bottle would not benefit from using the bottle. These are syndromic babies who have very narrow nasal passages and cannot breathe properly while trying to suckle. For these we usually improvise with syringes.
2. Do you notice that their weight gain improves when they change to using this bottle?
Yes, the babies' weight in most cases improves.
3. Does using the soft bottle shorten the time they need to stay on the ward at CoRSU when they are admitted with malnutrition?
Using the soft bottle has reduced the number of times the babies are admitted for nutritional rehabilitation. This is because, whenever they come back for reviews, they have had a great improvement in weight gain and there is no need for admission. They then wait for their scheduled surgeries.

A few of the babies with syndromes or complex cleft deformities (like holoprosencephaly, Pierre robins syndrome), take a long time during their hospital stay (most times they do not use the bottles and they are fed using an NG tube.

4. Why do you (nutrition team) like these bottles and teats?

The bottles and teats help the babies to consume less energy while feeding, and this helps them to gain weight faster. They compensate for the lack of the negative suction in palate babies due to the improved flow of milk brought about by the soft nature of the bottles (they can be easily pressed to improve the milk flow)
The teats are round and fit properly in the cleft.

5. Why do the mothers like these bottles and teats?
They have a better feeding experience. The feedback from the mothers is that the bottles help them a lot while feeding their babies. It's better than using a spoon or cup or NG tube
6. How long do the new silicone teats last?
Between 3 – 4 months. By the time of surgery, most teats are still functional. However some caretakers damage the teats when they try to enlarge the holes. They end up getting large tears.

7. The silicone teats also come in a faster flow- would it be useful for you to have some with a faster flow rate?

Yes, this would be useful; it would avoid the incidences mentioned in question no.6

8. Have you had any increased incidence of gastrointestinal infections associated with the ability to keep these bottles and teats clean?

This has not been noted; however with caretakers who do not maintain good hygiene practices, the babies do get diarrhea. For those who maintain good hygiene practices, the babies get less of these infections.

9. Have you had any problems with the bottles and teats that you would like to mention?

The second batch of the bottles was a harder compared to the first batch (that had green tops). The caretakers find themselves having to make a lot of effort to squeeze them.

10. Please tell us about a couple of specific babies that have used the bottles?

Baby suubi

He was born at full term with a birth weight of 3.4 kg, with bilateral cleft lip and palate. He started using the soft bottles and teats when he was 6 weeks old with 4.17kg. Initially he had been using a syringe for feeding since he was born (we had improvised since the bottles were not yet available).

At a 2 week review, he weighed 5.0 kg (he had gained 830g). After one month, he weighed 5.6 kg. He had his first surgery (modified mulliken cleft lip repair) at 3 months and he weighed 5.8 kg.

His next review will be on 10 July 2017.

Suubi's mother is happy that her son finally had his operation. Prior to the surgery, she was very anxious because she would always keep him inside the house and not take him out. She was scared of the stigma due to his condition.

Baby Blessing

Baby blessing was born at 38 weeks with a birth weight of 3.6 kg, with right unilateral cleft lip and palate. She was being fed with a spoon and taking cow's milk. She started using the soft bottle when she weighed 3.37 kg at 1 day old. The mother was able to purchase a low cost manual breast pump and she breast fed exclusively for the first 3 months.

Her weight increased from 3.85 kg, to 4.76 kg, to 5.53 kg to 5.6 kg.

She had her surgery on 22nd June 2017.



Figure 1: she had her surgery yesterday

Baby Precious

She was born at 36 weeks with a birth weight of 2.4 kg. The baby has a syndromic bilateral cleft lip and palate and by time she was referred to the nutrition team at 2 days, she had been taking water with some glucose. A soft bottle was given for her to use to feed when she was 2 days old and weighed 2.1 kg. After one week she weighed 2.65kg. Currently she weighs 6.8 kg at 4 months. The teats are in good condition although she has requested for a second bottle for hygiene purposes. She will have her surgery at 6 months after she has undergone a heart examination.

