Topic #5: How to Clean, Sterilize and Store Feeding Equipment

Breastfeeding is the gift of a lifetime, a gift that only a mother can give.

Why Does Equipment Need to be Cleaned, Sterilized and Stored Properly?

- Cleaning and sterilizing equipment removes harmful bacteria that could grow in the feeding and make babies sick.
- It is very important that the equipment used to feed and prepare food for infants has been cleaned very well and sterilized before use.
- Equipment includes bottles, nipples, lids, caps, rings and spoons.

Cleaning:

- **Step 1:** Wash your hands with soap and water, and dry them using a clean cloth or paper towel.
- **Step 2:** Wash all feeding and preparation equipment completely in hot, soapy water. Use a clean bottle and nipple brush to scrub the inside and outside of bottles, nipples and other bottle parts to make sure all remaining liquid is removed from the hard-to-reach places. Also, make sure the nipples are open. Hold each nipple upside down and fill it with water, then look for the water to drop slowly out of the nipple.
- **Step 3:** Rinse all parts of the bottle with clean water.

Sterilizing:

*Cleaned feeding and preparation equipment can be sterilized using a commercial sterilizer or a pan and boiling water.*

**Commercial Sterilizer**—Follow the manufacturer’s instructions.

**Pan and Boiling Water**—Follow the steps below:

- **Step 1:** Fill a large pan with water.
- **Step 2:** Place the cleaned bottles, nipples and other bottle parts into the water. Make sure that all parts are completely covered with water and that no air bubbles get trapped.
- **Step 3:** Cover the pan with a lid and bring it to a rolling boil, making sure the pan does not boil dry or run out of water.
- **Step 4:** Keep the pan covered until the equipment inside is needed or until ready to store.

Always sterilize all equipment before using it the first time. After the first use, there’s no need to sterilize your utensils. Simply wash these items with soap and water and allow them to air-dry. To prevent fungal growth, rinse nipples daily in equal parts vinegar and water, and allow them to air-dry.

For more information, call (570) 321-2069. SusquehannaHealth.org/Birthplace
Storage:

• **Step 1:** Wash your hands with soap and water, and dry them using a clean cloth or paper towel.
• **Step 2:** Assemble feeding bottles completely. This will prevent the inside of the bottle and the inside and outside of the bottle from becoming contaminated.
• **Step 3:** Store in a clean, dry place that is covered.

Breast Milk Is Best

1. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that babies have only breast milk for the first six months of life to achieve optimal growth, development and health.
2. Babies can be supplemented with bottle feedings even when breastfeeding. Bottle feedings may be with pumped breast milk or a breast milk substitute, such as formula. This can happen when:
   • Moms cannot nurse
   • She cannot be with her baby due to work or other reasons
   • When breast milk is not available
   • When moms are unable to breastfeed
   • When moms have made an informed decision not to breastfeed
   • When breastfeeding is not appropriate, such as when moms are taking medication that are contraindicated for breastfeeding, or the mom is HIV-positive

What is the Risk with Using a bottle?

1. If bottles and equipment are not cared for properly, they may contain bacteria that can cause serious illness in babies. Although infections are rare, they can be serious or fatal.
2. Infants at greatest risk of infections are young babies, especially those that are less than two months old. In addition, babies that are preterm, low birth weight or immunocompromised are also at greater risk of sickness.

How to Reduce the Risk?

1. Breastfeed as often as possible.
2. For infants at greatest risk, sterile liquid infant formula should be used, if available.
3. Correct preparation and storage of formula reduces the risk of illness.
4. Clean and sterilize all equipment prior to use. This removes harmful bacteria that could grow and make a baby ill.