



Standard 3: Don't use bottles or pacifiers

A baby nursing directly at the breast provides the strongest stimulation for a good milk supply and for natural lactational amenorrhea and infertility. Plus, by avoiding bottles and pacifiers your baby avoids the possibility of nipple confusion during the first few weeks of life. As Catholics we are called to be good stewards of the earth. Ecologically breastfeeding without bottles and pacifiers helps reduce the amount of plastics in the landfills. So, in actuality, you are contributing to a good milk supply, avoiding some breastfeeding difficulties, naturally spacing your family and taking care of the earth! And you thought you were just simply nursing your baby!

But is ecological breastfeeding without the use of bottles and pacifiers practical? From personal experience, I emphatically say "yes!" I have breastfed all my children and have never needed to use bottles or pacifiers. As part of the natural mothering lifestyle, I just simply take my young nursling with me when I go grocery shopping, on retreat with the Holy Family Institute, to the library with my older children, and to an occasional movie in the theaters to just name a few. I have even taken a nursing baby on my weekly evening out "by myself" and on date night with my husband. I have several children so just taking the quiet, nursing baby on my night out still refreshes me from the challenging work of motherhood. My husband and I also have a chance to have some needed quiet time on date night while we hold the baby and enjoy a good meal at a restaurant.

What if your baby's grandparents want to feed him a bottle? Offer them other ways to bond with the baby or to help care for him such as diaper changes, rocking him to sleep after he is done nursing, playing with him, or bathing him. Also, let the grandparents know that when he starts solids, they can help spoon feed him or can sit him on their lap during dinner.

Many moms also enjoy wearing their babies in slings or baby carriers. This enables the mother to do some work around the house or to help other children with their needs while satisfying the baby's need to be close to mom. You can breastfeed your baby in many of today's slings, too. When you purchase a sling, it usually comes with an instructional booklet and/or DVD if you would like to learn how to do this. Also, ask at your church's nursing mothers group meeting for additional assistance.