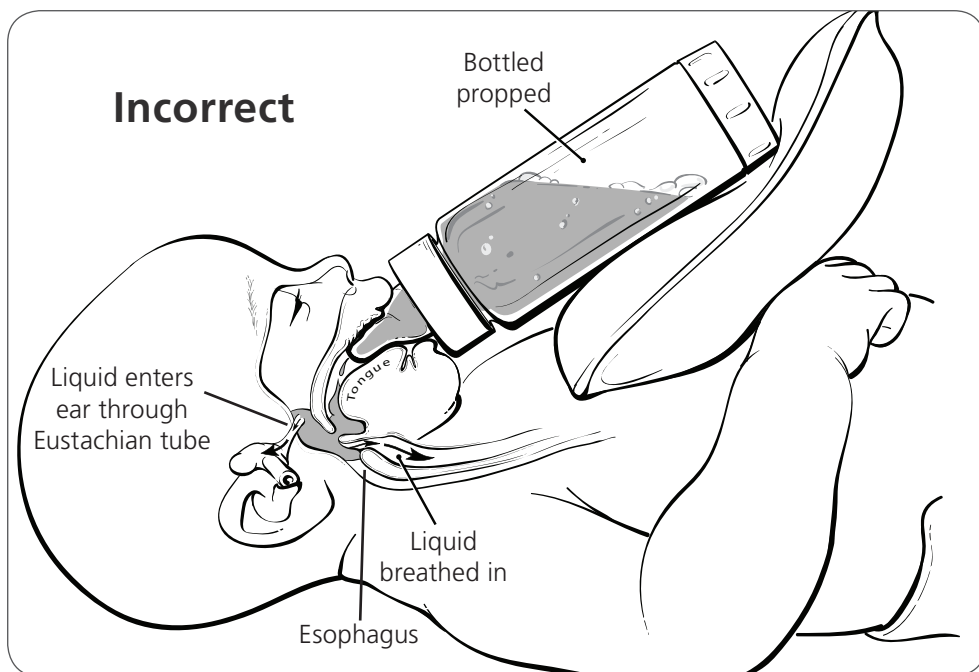


Let's Talk About...

Bottle Propping



Ear infections

If you bottle feed your baby while she is lying flat, she will be more prone to ear infections. Your baby has little openings from the back of her throat to her ears called a Eustachian tube (pronounced you-stay-shun tube). Adults have these tubes, too, but your baby's Eustachian tubes are shorter, wider, and flatter. When you feed your baby with a propped bottle the liquid pools in the back of her mouth. The liquid can then back up into her ears through the

Eustachian tube. This is bad because bacteria can then enter through the tube into the ear, and cause an ear infection. Prolonged ear infections can cause hearing loss. Hearing loss in a baby can make it harder for her to speak and learn.

What is bottle propping?

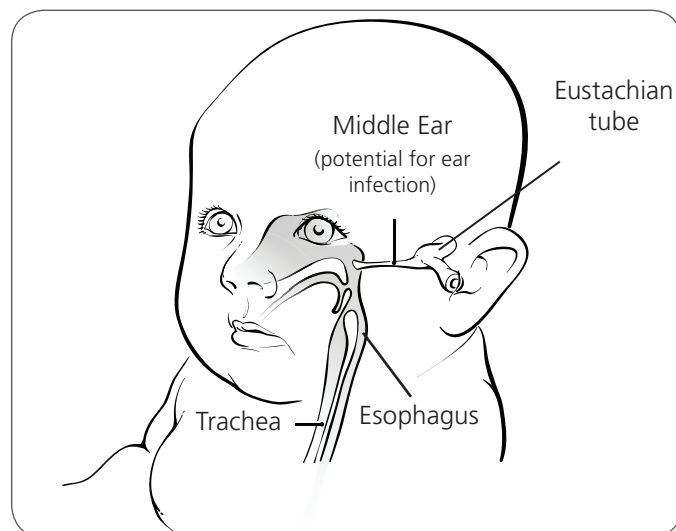
Bottle propping is when you give a baby a bottle by leaning the bottle against a pillow, or other support, rather than holding the baby and the bottle.

Why is bottle propping discouraged?

It is very important that your baby develop good eating habits. Bottle propping is discouraged for the following reasons:

Less interaction with parents

One of the best ways to establish a close relationship with your baby is to hold her during feedings. Nutrition is only one part of the feeding. This is a great time for you and your baby to have time together. Bottle propping does not allow for warm and loving interaction between you and your baby.



Choking/aspiration

Bottle propping makes it easier for your baby to choke. This is partly because she is not being watched. Liquid continues to come out of a propped bottle until it is empty and may cause your baby to choke. If your baby has fallen asleep before finishing the bottle, she may breathe in (aspirate) the liquid, rather than swallow it. Also, a lying down position makes it more likely that the liquid will go down the wrong tube. This is because the openings to the trachea (tray-key-a or tube for air) and the esophagus (ee-sof-a-gus or tube for food) are so close to each other.

Tooth decay

If you prop your baby's bottle liquid pools in her mouth. This can cause tooth decay as soon as her

teeth appear. When normal germs inside the mouth combine with food or drink, an acid forms. This acid can cause tooth decay. Saliva naturally rinses most of the acid away. If you prop your baby's bottle, formula stays in her mouth and decays her teeth. Baby teeth act as guides for the permanent teeth that come in later, so it is important that they do not decay or fall out early.

What can I do?

When you feed your baby, hold her in a semi-upright position. Do not prop her bottles.

Use feeding time as a time to get to know your baby. Babies respond to touch, eye contact, and speech. Don't give your baby food or drinks at bedtime. If she must have a bottle at bedtime to sleep, fill it with water. Use a pacifier at bedtime instead of a bottle.

