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***Newborn Dwarf Baby Goat Guide***

After they receive colostrum, bottle fed kids should be fed regular whole cow milk from the grocery store. Don't use canned milk (goat or cow) and **DO NOT FEED POWDERED MILK REPLACER/FORMULA**. Real whole milk, even from a cow, is much better for them than milk replacer, which can cause diarrhea and floppy kid syndrome. Very often, problems with bottle-fed kids stem from the use of milk replacer. NOTE: There is a huge debate about milk replacer vs. cow milk. Everyone in the world seems to have a different opinion. What to feed is ultimately your decision. I’m just telling you what I’ve personally raised mine on (cow’s milk) and the trouble I’ve personally seen with milk replacers. There are also options out there including recipes involving buttermilk and evaporated milk mixed in with whole milk… like I said, lots of opinions and ideas. Please make the decision you feel is best. If you do choose a milk replacer, PLEASE make sure it does not have soy protein sources.

You can use a cheap human baby bottle to feed milk – just make a small “X” cut into the nipple to enable a slightly faster flow of milk. I also recommend the red lamb bottle top nipples that you can find at Tractor Supply. I snip a bit off the top of this one too, but not an X. Trying different nipples is a good idea, some babies are particular.

If the baby does not want to nurse, you must work with them. Sometime is it extremely (and I mean extremely) hard to get a kid to take a bottle. Be patient. Get him in your lap, pry open his mouth and shove in the nipple. He may struggle and not want the nipple. Milk will probably get everywhere but into the kid. Have paper towels on hand. Put yourself in his place. He has no idea what the bottle is and what you are doing. He wants his "real" mommy. Keep working with him. Eventually hunger will aid you and he will realize the bottle is food, not some horrible torture device. Keep working with the kid. Make sure the milk is warm (103\*), make sure the nipple is soft and warm. Kids don't like hard cold nipples: they aren't like "mommy". Keep the nipple in your warm pocket until right before you try the bottle.

PRO TIP: Pour a glob of clear karo syrup on your fingertip and rub this around in the baby’s mouth…. Give it about 5-10 min to absorb and then try bottle feeding again. This gets the blood sugar up and encourages eating. Every kid is different. Patience, attempts, trying different nipples, and hunger will almost always get a kid started on a bottle within 24 hours. If you have difficulty, please reach out and I’ll try to help you as much as I can.

If you have trouble getting the kid to take the bottle there are a few helpful tricks that can be used to help the kid nurse. Make sure the milk is warm. Milk temperature is especially important to very young kids. A goat's normal temperature is around 102 degrees, a few degrees warmer than human temperature, so it should feel slightly warmer than your skin to the touch. Be sure to shake the bottle to get out any hot spots (but try to not make air bubble in the milk – you do not want him to suck down air). Try forcing the kid's mouth open, pushing the bottle in and cradling your hand around the goat's mouth to hold the bottle in place. Rub the top of the goat's head with your chin. This simulates the dark warmness of the belly of the mother to a baby goat. Also, vigorous rubbing of his tail head will often help stimulate the nursing reflex (simulates his mother cleaning him). If the kid has trouble getting any milk after 12 hours, try adding a teaspoon of molasses to the milk.

A kid's system is designed to drink from a nipple that is higher than his head so that milk goes down the "right way", bypassing the rumen, which is not functioning yet (they CANNOT get any nutrition from grass, feed, etc. - ONLY milk). When you hold the bottle, you need to hold it up, at an angle so his head is pointing slightly up and his neck is slightly extended as he drinks.

*Below: Example of the proper angle to hold the bottle*



**Please weigh your baby when you get home!**

**We recommend weighing your baby weekly/every other week to make sure you’re feeding the correct amount. (You can weigh by simply stepping on a normal human scale and getting your own weight, then hold the baby and step onto the scale and record that weight – calculate the difference to get your baby’s weight.)**

**Babies should eat 10-20% of their body weight DAILY.**

**Below is a chart to show an example of a typical, big strapping Nigerian Dwarf baby.**

**A tiny baby will eat a fraction of this! It all depends on their size! Don’t force them to eat more if they stop.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age | Amount | Total Amount per Day | Example Schedule |
| 24 hours – 1 week | Up to 2 oz per feeding – 6x per day | 12 oz | 6am-9am-12noon-3pm-6pm-9pm |
| 1 – 2 weeks | Up to 4 oz per feeding – 4x per day | 16 oz | 8am-12noon-4pm-8pm |
| 2 – 8 weeks  | Up to 8 oz per feeding – 3x per day | 24 oz | 8am-2pm-8pm |
| 8 – 10 weeks | Up to 10 oz per feeding – 2x a day | 20 oz | 8am-8pm |
| 10 – 16 weeks  | Up to 10 oz per feeding – 1x a day | 10 oz | Whenever you want |

\* NEVER FEED A DWARF GOAT MORE THEN 10 OZ AT ONE FEEDING
\* OVER-FEEDING A HUNGRY BOTTLE BABY CAN LEAD TO MANY HEALTH PROBLEMS OR EVEN DEATH!

**Feel their bellies after a feeding.  You want their bellies "full" but not "hard or "tight"**

Each baby is a little different. The best thing for a baby is to have small amounts of milk frequently.

Do not bottle-feed water; it is counterproductive.  This does not teach kids to drink water.  If you fill their belly up with water from a bottle, they have no reason to try nibbling on new foods or drinking water out of a bucket.

Always have hay or grass on hand for the baby to nibble on. Once old enough, letting the goat nibble on things outside is best of all, as picking up microbes from the ground will help its rumen bacteria grow.

***Never******make big changes in the way you feed a goat all at once***, or feed large quantities of a new food that the goat has never had before, if you do this, you can throw off the bacteria in the goat's rumen, which can cause the goat to bloat, or the rumen to shut down. When changing a goat's diet, do so slowly, to give the bacteria in the rumen time to adjust.

**Feeding Baby Goats Grain or Goat Feed**
Remember that concentrated feeds such as sweet feed, goat chow, or any pelleted concentrated feed is difficult for a baby goat to digest because the rumen is not yet fully developed and will not be fully functional for the first 6 months of life. If you must feed grain or sweet feed and your baby goat begins to have scours (diarrhea) - cut back. Adding too much sweet feed or concentrated feed such as pellets or goat chow can throw a baby goat into digestive upset. As a general guideline, a 5 lb kid should eat no more than 1/2 ounce per day of grain or concentrated feed). All that being said, I do NOT recommend grain feeding AT ALL if you have a male. Males are particularly susceptible to growing deadly urinary stones when fed grains/feed mixes. Fresh pasture, hay, and brush is the best thing for your goat.

**Minerals**

Loose minerals specifically formulated for goats are a **necessary** part of a goat's diet. They can be bought at feed stores, including Tractor Supply. Cattle, sheep and horse salt blocks don't work for goats. A goat can't get the proper type and amount of minerals from a hard salt block. Use only loose minerals or the blocks that “crumble”.

**Deworming**

It is best to not deworm unless you think the goat looks poor OR if your fecal test comes back positive. Most any vet will do a fecal test where you just drop it off for analysis. It is always best to do a test so you know exactly what to use/if you need to deworm. You can learn to do at home fecal tests, too. There are free instructional videos on YouTube.

There are lots of great informational sites online, too, to help with anything you need. I have an entire section on my website called “Useful Info” with lots of educational material.

I also personally recommend <http://www.fiascofarm.com/> and <http://www.thegoatspot.net/>

Wishing you many happy days with your new baby goat!

~ Emily Mitchell

Owner, Mischief Managed Farm

P.S. I regularly have baby goats for sale – please recommend me to a friend if you love your new addition ☺ My cell is 864-419-5297 and the farm website is ***mischiefmanagedfarm.com***. I also *love* to see photos of the kids as they grow up so feel free to share! Thank you!