



# News

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Contact: Alison Ventura  
805-756-5693; [akventur@calpoly.edu](mailto:akventur@calpoly.edu)

## Cal Poly Study Sheds Light on Mothers' Bottle-Feeding Behavior

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Parents who are bottle-feeding may be able to decrease their infants' risk for overfeeding simply by using a weighted, opaque bottle. In a Cal Poly study recently [published in the journal Appetite](#), researchers found that the amount of infant formula some mothers fed their babies depended on whether the mothers could see and feel how full the bottle was.

The study was undertaken to test a widely held belief about the differences between breast-feeding and bottle-feeding.

"here's been this belief that one of the benefits of breast-feeding, when compared to bottle-feeding, is how much information the mom receives," said Alison Ventura, the Cal Poly kinesiology professor who led the study. "Breast-feeding mothers can't see how much milk the infant gets and so have to respond to cues from the infant to know when he's full. Mothers using a bottle may be tempted to respond to bottle-based cues instead."

Feeding that is responsive to infant cues is important, because infant overfeeding is widely recognized as a cause of excess weight gain in children 0-2 years old. Infants who gain too much weight are at risk for obesity and metabolic problems later in life.

Ventura's study is the first to test whether bottle-feeding mothers respond to bottle-based cues. Some of the mothers in the study reported that they usually try to get their infants to finish an entire bottle. The ones who reported they pressured their infants to finish a bottle fed their children less when they couldn't see or feel how full the bottle was. With these contextual cues removed, mothers were forced to respond to the infants' cues that indicated they were full.

"There's been a greater recognition of how important the early post-natal period is," Ventura said. "If a mom has a hard time understanding her infants' cues during these early periods, that can have long-lasting effects."

Based on the results of the study, Ventura recommends using an opaque bottle to increase parents' ability to feed their child an appropriate amount in response to infant cues.

Ventura recently received a \$150,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health to do a follow-up study with a larger population of mothers.

### Related Links:

[A pilot study comparing opaque, weighted bottles with conventional, clear bottles for infant feeding](#), by AK Ventura and Golen R. Pollak, published in the Feb. 2015 edition of *Appetite*.

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Phone: 805-756-1111