Using a Bulb Syringe

A bulb syringe is used to remove mucus or spit-up formula/breast milk from your baby’s nose/mouth.

How to Use a Bulb Syringe:

1. Squeeze the air out of the round end of the rubber bulb.
2. With the bulb still squeezed, put the open tip into one side of your baby’s nose.
3. Slowly release pressure on the bulb. This causes mucus to be pulled out of the nose and into the bulb syringe.
4. Remove the bulb syringe from the nose. Squeeze the bulb into a tissue to get rid of the mucus.
5. Repeat on the other side of the nose.
6. Gently wipe off any mucus or spit-up around the nose/mouth with a tissue.
7. Do not try to clean out the nose with a cotton swab (Q-tip®). This can push mucus in deeper and make it harder to get out.
8. If you can’t get the mucus out of the nose because it is thick or dry, your doctor may recommend using saline nose drops.

How to Clean the Bulb Syringe:

1. Squeeze cool soapy water into the bulb syringe. Squeeze and let go of the bulb syringe several times. This rinses out the inside of the bulb and removes water and mucus.
2. Next, squeeze tap water into the bulb. Then squeeze out to rinse. Let the bulb dry.
3. Use cool rather than hot water to clean the bulb syringe. Hot water makes the mucus hard to remove.
4. When the bulb syringe is used often: After the final rinse with plain water, refill the bulb syringe with water and place it in a pan of boiling water. Boil for 10 minutes. Carefully remove the bulb syringe from the water and squeeze out any water inside. Let the bulb syringe cool before using again.

Call your doctor or the Children’s Mercy Hospital Information Line at (816) 234-3188 if:

- Your baby has cold symptoms like cough, fever, or a stopped-up nose that makes it hard for him to eat, drink or breathe.
- You have concerns about how much or how often your baby spits up.
- You have questions or concerns about using the bulb syringe or your baby’s health.