

## ENHANCING INFANT FEEDING: THE INNOVATIVE COLLABORATION BETWEEN VERNAY AND MEDELA

Vernay and Medela have joined forces to introduce an improved Supplemental Nursing System (SNS) that offers continuous, consistent feeding flow. The SNS is a revolutionary product designed to enhance feeding methods using tubes to supplement a baby's nutrition with breast milk. The system includes a container that holds the supplement with a thin feeding tube attached. The feeding tube is placed alongside the caregiver's nipple or finger, delivering the supplement while the baby nurses or suckles.

The SNS was developed to support mothers experiencing lactation challenges and babies struggling with latching onto the breast. This system is commonly used by parents breastfeeding adopted babies, premature infants, or those with medical conditions that necessitate additional nutrition for optimal growth and development. One of the key advantages of the SNS is that it allows parents to continue breastfeeding while supplementing their baby's nutrition. This unique feature helps sustain the mother's breast milk supply while ensuring the baby receives the essential nutrients to support their overall well-being.

### Overcoming Flow Challenges

One of the pivotal stages in developing the SNS was overcoming flow control challenges. Maintaining a consistent flow through appropriate venting is crucial for healthy feeding. The initial valve used in the system allowed a vacuum to occur inside the bottle as fluid was drained through feeding. This vacuum made it difficult for the baby to extract the liquid from the bottle, resulting in slower or inefficient feeding. Additionally, the vacuum allowed air to be drawn into the baby's stomach, leading to discomfort and gas.

### Collaboration of Expertise

Medela approached Vernay to find an alternative solution for proper ventilation during the SNS feeding process.

By leveraging Vernay's extensive experience in flow control design and Medela's unsurpassed infant feeding knowledge, engineers identified the product design solution: the VA3677 duckbill valve from Vernay. Vernay Medical's duckbill valve effectively vents air, enabling a smooth fluid flow to the newborn while offering outstanding quality and consistent performance.

### Global Market/Local Team Approach

Medela and Vernay are global organizations that understand the benefits and challenges of serving markets around the world. This successful collaboration engaged team members from multiple sites, which allowed this project to move from concept to launch - and into the hands of parents - in less than ten months. Vernay's VA3677 duckbill valve is produced in Oldenzaal, Netherlands, then shipped to Griffin, Georgia, for cleaning, final inspection, and packaging before final delivery to Medela.

This partnership between Vernay and Medela sets the stage for continued innovation to deliver products that enhance the lives of parents and their babies worldwide.



Medela Supplement Nursing Device assembly



Medela SNS parts before assembly; note the white Vernay duckbill valve