

Instructional Guide

FOR GIVING YOUR BABY THE BEST

**Breastmilk
Is Good
Nutrition
and More!**

Breastfeeding is the Best Choice

Good nutrition is important throughout our lives. It is especially important during infancy and childhood because of its effect on growth and development. Breastmilk is good nutrition. It protects your baby from illness and infection and promotes his brain development. Many of the important ingredients in breastmilk are not found in artificial baby milk.

Breastmilk is very easily digested and changes daily to meet your baby's nutritional needs. It also helps in other ways. Breastfeeding creates a close emotional bond between you and your baby. It improves your baby's oral and facial development. And it lowers your risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and osteoporosis later in life.

By breastfeeding, you are doing something that only you can do for your baby. *Congratulations on giving your baby the best!*



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I'm a little nervous. Does my body know I plan to breastfeed?

Your body has been preparing to breastfeed throughout your entire pregnancy. In the fourth month of pregnancy, your breasts started producing colostrum, the first milk for your baby. Colostrum is a thick milk that is clear and colorless or yellowish. It is high in protein, which is exactly what your baby needs in the first few days. Like mature breastmilk, it is full of antibodies that protect your baby from infections. Colostrum also helps your baby pass the dark, tarry stools he will have in the first day or two. This reduces his chance of jaundice. Nurse your baby often in the first few days so he'll get plenty of colostrum.



A couple of other tips:



Babies are very alert right after delivery and should be breastfed within an hour of birth, if possible. Ask the hospital staff to help you get started.



Avoid giving bottles and pacifiers in the first few weeks. This can confuse the baby and make it harder for the baby to breastfeed.

How should I hold the baby when I feed him?

It is important that the baby is positioned and attached to the breast in a way that allows him to get all the milk he can. This will also help prevent sore nipples.

Whatever feeding position you use, here are some general suggestions that will help you both have a good experience:

- Try to nurse him in a dimly lit and quiet room.
- Make sure you are comfortable before you position him.
- Use pillows to raise your baby to breast level.
- Make sure your baby's ear, shoulder, and hip are in a straight line. Your baby should not have to turn his head to nurse.



Continued. How should I hold the baby when I feed him.



Cradle Hold

- Place a pillow in your lap.
- Put your baby on his side, on the pillow, tummy to tummy with you.
- Rest his head on your forearm, with his nose in front of your nipple.
- Tuck his lower arm under your breast.

Football Hold (most comfortable for women who have had a C-section)

- Place a pillow at your side.
- Put your baby on the pillow with his legs tucked under your arm.
- Slide your forearm under your baby's back and support his head with your hand.



Lying Down (most comfortable for women who have had a difficult delivery or for night feeds)

- Lie on your side with knees bent. You may want to place pillows between your knees, under your head and neck, and behind your back.
- Put your baby on his side, facing your nipple.
- Place your other arm, a pillow, or a rolled-up blanket behind your baby to support him.



Continued. How should I hold the baby when I feed him.

Once you and your baby have found a comfortable position, you are ready to start the feeding. **Here are some tips to get your baby to latch on to your breast.**

Support your breast with your thumb on top and four fingers below, keeping your hand away from the areola, the dark skin surrounding your nipple.



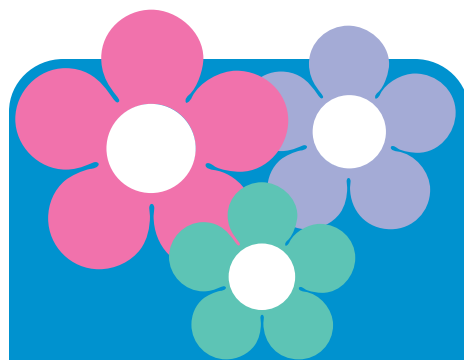
1 Tickle your baby's upper lip with your nipple.



2 Wait until his mouth opens wide, like a yawn.



3 Quickly bring the baby onto your nipple and breast so that he gets a good mouthful of breast.



You can tell your baby is latched on well if:

- both of his lips are curled out, not tucked in;
- the nipple and about an inch of your areola are in the baby's mouth;
- his chin is buried in your breast with his nose tipped away or lightly touching; and
- his tongue is visible when you pull down his lower lip.

You can tell your milk is flowing if:

- you feel a tingly sensation in your breasts;
- you hear your baby swallow; or
- you see milk leaking from your other breast.

My breasts feel too full. Do I have too much milk?

When your baby is 2 to 5 days old, your milk will become thinner and bluish-white in color, like skim milk. Your breasts will also feel fuller. When this happens, it is very important to **nurse your baby frequently** to keep your breasts from becoming too full or engorged.

If your breasts become too full, take a warm shower or place a warm, wet towel over your breasts and nipples for a few minutes before each feeding. Gently massage your breasts toward your nipples. Hand express or gently pump your breasts to get the milk flowing. The idea is to soften your breasts so your baby can latch on.

Ice packs can be used between feeds to keep the swelling down. Green cabbage leaves can be used along with or in place of ice packs. **Here's how to use cabbage leaves to reduce the swelling:**

- ❖ Remove leaves from a head of cabbage and wash them.
- ❖ Remove the large center vein and cut a hole for your nipple.
- ❖ Place cabbage leaves inside your bra or over your breasts, covering all of the swollen area. Leave on for 10 minutes.
- ❖ If your breasts are still very firm, change leaves and repeat up to four times or until breasts begin to soften.
- ❖ The use of cabbage leaves should be discontinued after four uses or when breasts begin to soften or feel tingly, or milk begins to drip from your nipples.
- ❖ Overuse of cabbage may decrease your milk supply.



How do I know when my baby is hungry?

Your baby will tell you when he is hungry by showing feeding cues. **Watch your baby closely so you can feed him when he shows early hunger cues. It will be easier to feed him if he is not fussy and crying.**

His early feeding cues include:

- ❖ Sucking on his tongue, lips, hands, or fingers while asleep
- ❖ Moving his arms and hands toward his mouth
- ❖ Restless movements while asleep
- ❖ Rapid eye movements under his eyelids
- ❖ Opening his mouth when his lips are touched
- ❖ “Rooting” or searching for your nipple
- ❖ Making small sounds

Late hunger cues include:

- ❖ Crying
- ❖ Fussiness



How do I know when my baby is full?

At the beginning of a feeding, your milk will be watery to satisfy your baby's thirst. At the end of a feeding, your milk will be rich and creamy, which satisfies your baby's hunger. Allow your baby to nurse as long as he wants.

He will signal when he is full when he:

- “falls off” your breast, releasing the nipple;
- falls asleep; or
- relaxes his body and opens his fists.

If he stops sucking and does not come off the breast on his own, slide your finger into the corner of his mouth to break the suction. Burp him and offer the other breast. He may nurse again right away or he may take the other side in a few minutes or a few hours.



How do I feed my sleepy baby?

Some babies will be very sleepy for the first few days. Wake your baby by completely undressing him except for his diaper. Gently place him on your chest, against your bare skin. If needed, use a blanket to cover yourself and the baby. Skin-to-skin contact is very comforting to a newborn and will encourage your baby to wake up and nurse. Keep your baby against your skin and gently stroke or massage his back, arms, hands, and feet. Talk to him in a soothing voice when he opens his eyes. When he begins to “root,” move him to the breast to feed.



How can I tell if my baby is getting enough to eat?

Your baby should be gaining weight. Newborns often lose weight in the first few days of life but most return to their birthweight by 2 weeks of age. After a baby returns to his birthweight, he should gain about 4 to 8 ounces a week. Make sure you keep your doctor's appointments so you can see if your baby is gaining weight.

Your baby should be nursing often. Newborn babies have a tiny stomach, about the size of their fist. That is why they nurse so often. **Newborns should:**

- nurse at least 8–12 times a day or every 1–3 hours during the day, and
- have no more than one four-hour sleep period in 24 hours.

Many babies will cluster feed, or nurse almost constantly, at one time of the day. Most babies do this in the evening. This is completely normal. It does not mean you don't have enough milk. The more frequently you nurse your baby, the more milk you will make.



Your baby should have plenty of wet and dirty diapers. Check the chart below to see if your baby is dirtying enough diapers.

A newborn's urine should be colorless. A newborn's stools are usually black in the first day or two, greenish for a day or two, then yellowish and seedy by day four or so. An occasional green stool after this period is also normal.

	Wet Diapers	Dirty Diapers
Day 1	1	1 (black, tarry)
Day 2	2	2 (brownish black, tarry)
Day 3	3	3 (greenish)
Day 4	4	3 or more (greenish to yellow)
Day 5	5	3 or more (yellow)
Day 6 to Day 45	6 or more	3 or more (yellow)

By day six, many breastfed babies will dirty almost every diaper. This is normal because breastmilk is very gentle and easily passed through the baby's system.



Do I have too little milk?

Sometime between your baby's first and third week of life, he will suddenly want to nurse more often. This often occurs at the same time your breasts naturally soften and feel less full. This does not mean you don't have enough milk. It means your baby is having his first growth spurt.

When your baby goes through a growth spurt, he will eat almost constantly for one to three days or, sometimes, for up to a week. Your body will naturally respond to the frequent nursing by making more milk. Avoid giving bottles. You will make more milk if you nurse more often.

Growth spurts usually occur around these times:

- 1 to 3 weeks of age
- 6 weeks of age
- 3 months of age

How do I know when to call my doctor?

You should call your doctor if your baby:

- does not regain his birthweight by 2 weeks of age.
- has fewer than six wet diapers a day by his sixth day of life.
- has fewer than three stools a day by his third day of life.
- will not wake up to nurse at least eight times a day.
- falls asleep or stops nursing immediately after latch-on.



With a brand-new baby, how can I take care of myself?



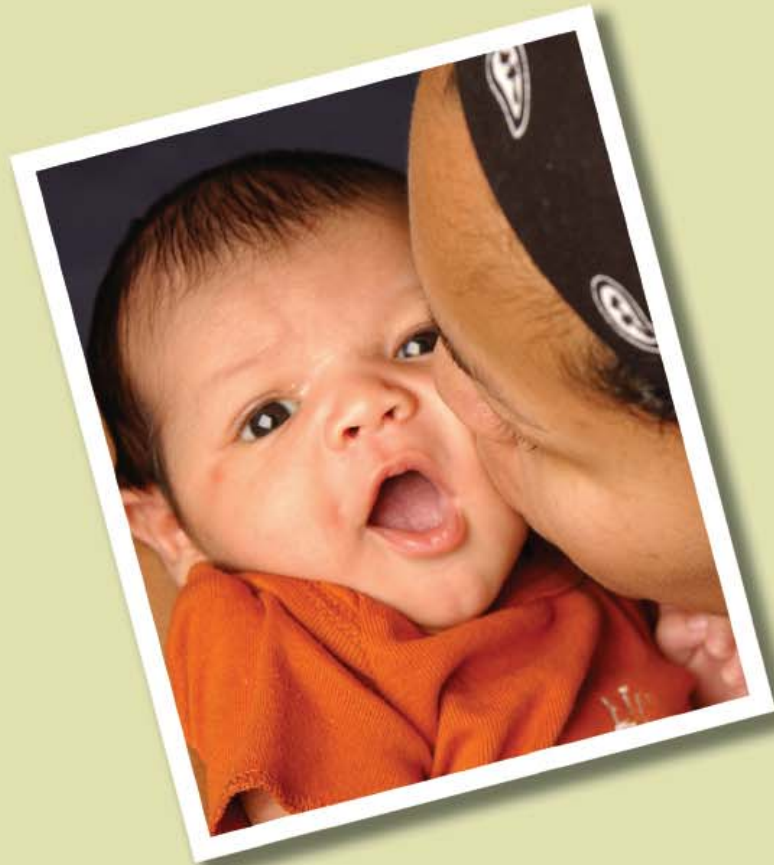
Forget about housework and try to sleep when the baby sleeps. **When you are tired, lie down for feedings. Eat enough food** to satisfy your hunger and have something to drink or eat beside you each time you sit down to nurse. **Keep meals simple** — such as a sandwich, soup, and fruit. And **limit caffeinated drinks** to no more than two a day. Check with your doctor before taking any medications.

Many women experience mild nipple soreness in the first few days of breastfeeding. This is normal and should only last a few days. **To soothe sore nipples, gently rub breastmilk into your nipples at the end of a feed.**

If the soreness does not go away or gets worse, see a breastfeeding counselor right away. **Call your local WIC office or 1 (800) 514-6667 for breastfeeding help.** The soreness is most likely caused by the way the baby is latching on or is positioned at the breast. Once the cause of soreness is corrected, it will quickly go away.

Hang in there. This can be a challenging time, but the positive effects of breastfeeding for you and your baby's health will last a lifetime.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants be breastfed for at least the first 12 months of life. Breastfeeding past 1 year of age should continue for as long as mother and infant desire.



Do you have questions about breastfeeding?
Please call your local WIC clinic or
1 (800) 514-6667.

We would be glad to visit with you and answer any questions or concerns you may have about breastfeeding. WIC wants you and your baby to be as healthy as can be.



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