A Guide to Breastfeeding

LIVING AND LEARNING TOGETHER
The decision to breastfeed is a positive one for both you and your baby. By choosing to breastfeed, you are giving your baby the healthiest start possible.

Mother’s milk (breast milk) is the best food for your baby. Besides having all the nutrition your baby needs to grow, mother’s milk has special properties that help protect your baby from illness. For these reasons, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends breastfeeding for at least the first year of your baby’s life. (In fact, the AAP recommends that for the first 6 months, mother’s milk should be the only food your baby receives.) After the first year, breastfeeding should continue for as long as mother and baby wish.
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**Note:** Since the use of he/she and him/her can be distracting, this booklet alternates references to the baby’s gender.

In this booklet, the following icon is used to show when you need to seek medical care:

The symptoms may indicate a problem. Call your baby’s doctor now to determine the best course of action.

You can also see a summary of this information on page 31.
The benefits

*Breastfeeding has many benefits for both you and your baby.*

**For the baby:**

- Mother’s milk contains antibodies, which are substances that help your baby resist disease. In fact, breastfed babies have fewer ear infections, lung infections, and respiratory illnesses than formula-fed babies.
- Mother’s milk provides your baby with the best nutritional balance — and rarely causes allergies. It is also easier to digest, and your baby is less likely to vomit or have diarrhea.
- Mother’s milk is free and convenient. It doesn’t need to be prepared and is always in supply. It’s even good for the environment, since there are no bottles, cans, or boxes to throw away!
- Studies have shown that breastfeeding is linked to improved intelligence and retinal (eye) development, especially in preterm infants.

**For the mother:**

- Breastfeeding reduces the risk of ovarian cancer.
- Breastfeeding reduces the risk of breast cancer in premenopausal women.
- Breastfeeding builds bone strength to protect against bone fractures in older age.
- Breastfeeding helps the uterus return to its pre-pregnancy size more quickly.
- Breastfeeding burns calories and helps you get back to your pre-pregnancy weight more quickly.
The challenges

Whether you know you want to breastfeed or are just beginning to think about this decision, you’re sure to have many questions. You may be concerned about how to fit breastfeeding into your busy life or that your family and friends won’t support your decision. Or, you may wonder if you’ll be physically able to breastfeed.

It’s true that breastfeeding doesn’t necessarily come easily for everyone. You may have difficulty with positioning, worry that your baby is not getting enough milk, or have sore or tender nipples. Also, it takes practice and patience to find a pattern that works best for you and your baby. Having the support of family and friends is helpful when you are breastfeeding, as is knowing that you are giving your baby the best possible start in life.

The goals of this guide

The goals of this Guide to Breastfeeding are to teach you what breastfeeding is all about and to answer common questions about getting started and overcoming some of the challenges of breastfeeding. You should feel confident about your decision to breastfeed and comfortable in learning what works best for you and your baby. Note: Be careful with breastfeeding information you find on the Internet. Not all websites are reliable. If you have questions about information from a website, check with your provider.

Lactation is another word for breastfeeding. If you have trouble with breastfeeding, can’t seem to keep up your milk supply, or your baby shows signs of not getting enough milk, you may be referred to a lactation consultant.

A lactation consultant is a healthcare provider who has advanced training and certification in breastfeeding.
Anatomy of the Breast

Before learning the specifics of how to breastfeed, you should first know how your breasts perform this remarkable function. During pregnancy, your body makes all of the nutrients your baby needs to grow and thrive in your womb. After your baby’s birth, your breasts naturally begin to provide milk, making as much as is needed to feed your baby as she grows outside your body. The picture below shows how it works.
Milk Production and Delivery

Preparing to make milk — what happens in pregnancy

During early pregnancy, your breasts may become fuller and more tender as the milk-making glands develop. As your breasts enlarge and blood flow increases, small stretch marks may appear and the veins in your breasts may be more visible. Your nipples may also become more sensitive to touch. By the sixth month of pregnancy, your breasts are ready to produce milk.

Producing and delivering milk

Once your baby is born, your body knows it’s no longer pregnant, and your breasts begin to make milk. The more you breastfeed or pump, the more milk your body will make. Each time you breastfeed or pump, your body releases the milk. The release of milk is called letdown.

The first few times you breastfeed, letdown may take a few minutes. It will eventually occur much more quickly, usually within a few seconds. Sometimes with letdown, milk may start dripping from the other breast, and you may feel strong cramping in your uterus. These are normal signs.

The milk you make

Your body makes different types of milk to meet your baby’s needs. Colostrum, the white, clear, or yellowish “first milk” that may leak from your breasts during late pregnancy, is your baby’s first food. It provides your baby with food and antibodies (disease-fighting substances, similar to medicine) that your body has built up over time to help protect your baby.

During the first few days after delivery, your breasts produce colostrum. Over the next two weeks, your breasts will gradually begin to produce mature mother’s milk. Also, the milk your baby drinks can change over the course of a single feeding. The more-watery foremilk comes first in a feeding, giving your baby plenty of liquid along with nutrients and antibodies. As your baby continues to drink, the milk gradually changes to creamy hindmilk, which gives your baby additional healthy fats. It’s important for your baby to get both foremilk and hindmilk at each feeding. An imbalance could cause your baby to have extra gas or to have medical problems. Contact a lactation consultant if you have questions.
Getting Started

This section describes options for positioning your baby and getting a proper latch-on.

When your baby is ready to eat

When your baby wants to eat, he will give you cues to show you how hungry he is. It’s best to feed your baby when he is ready to eat rather than trying to follow a set schedule.

When your baby starts to get hungry, he may move around a little, open his mouth, and turn his head as if rooting for the breast. If he’s very hungry, he may put his hand in his mouth, stretch, and move a lot. Babies who are not fed when they show hunger will become agitated or upset and cry hard. If your baby is upset, you should calm him down before breastfeeding. Cuddle him to your chest, and talk to him. Skin-on-skin cuddling may work well to calm your baby so you can feed him.

Positioning yourself and your baby

Every mother and her baby have different needs, so you’ll want to find positions and holds that are comfortable for both of you. You may find that placing a rolled towel or washcloth beneath your breast supports you and helps your baby latch on better. Experiment a bit, and use what works best for you. As your baby grows, you may find your preference changes.

Laid-back position

A laid-back position — in which your head, neck, and shoulders are supported and your baby is resting on your body — is a good way to begin breastfeeding with your new baby. It’s very comfortable for both mom and baby and seems to help newborns take the breast in deeply.

You can use this position in bed or in a couch or soft chair. Just arrange your bottom so that you can lean back into the pillows or cushions, far enough to have your baby rest completely on your body. (If you’ve had a C-section, have the baby lie across your body in a way that protects the incision — try different angles.) In this laid-back position, you don’t need to lift your baby up with your arms. Your baby’s weight is completely supported by your body, so you and baby can relax and enjoy.
**Football hold**

Many women find the football hold helpful, in part because it seems to help babies latch on well. Especially good for large-breasted women, this position can also help protect a cesarean incision, provide you with a free hand, or allow you to breastfeed two babies at once.

Begin by placing pillows at your back and side to support you as you hold the baby. Hold the baby in your arm and lay your arm on the pillow at your side. Support your baby's neck and head with your hand and support his back with your forearm. Tuck the baby's legs between your arm and body, as if carrying a football. If your baby is troubled by gas, adjust this hold so your baby sits slightly upright, leaving less room for air in his tummy.

**Cross-cradle hold**

The cross-cradle hold often works well for babies who are having trouble latching on or who are very small.

For this hold, position yourself comfortably with pillows behind you. Lean back slightly so that you don't have to bend over the baby. Support the baby with your arm and place your arm on a pillow or cushion in a horizontal or semi-upright position. Hold the baby using the arm opposite from the breast you'll begin feeding from. Support the baby's neck and head with this hand as his body extends along the length of your forearm. Use the hand on the side of the breast you are feeding from to support the breast. Position the baby's nose at the level of your nipple, with his body on his side, facing you. When looking down, you should not see any space between you and your baby. His ear, shoulder, and hip should be in a straight line.

**Side-lying**

For breastfeeding in bed or keeping an active baby off a cesarean incision, the side-lying hold is a good choice.

Stretch out on your side with your baby facing you, tummy to tummy. Use pillows to provide you and your baby with back support. If you want to switch breasts, gather your baby close to your chest, then roll onto your back and across to the other side.

**Cradle hold**

The cradle hold usually works best when your baby has learned to breastfeed well.

For this hold, sit upright, making sure you have good back support. Select a chair with armrests or use pillows to help raise your baby to breast height. Keep your knees even with your hips by putting a stool or pillows under your feet. Now, cradle your baby at your breast with your baby's tummy facing yours. When looking down, there should not be any space between you and your baby. Your baby's ear, shoulder, and hip should be in a straight line.
Offering your breast and helping your baby latch on

Begin by supporting your breast with your hand. Put your thumb on top and your fingers below the breast, cupping your breast with your hand in a “C” or “U” shape. Make sure that the fingers on the underside of your breast aren’t touching the areola (the darker skin around your nipple).

Next, position your baby’s body by bringing him in close to your side.

Position your baby’s head so that his nose is in line with your nipple. Encourage your baby to open his mouth wide by tickling his upper lip with your nipple.

When your baby’s mouth is wide open, bring him toward your breast, making sure that:

- **Your nipple is pointing toward the roof of your baby’s mouth.**
- **Your baby’s upper lip is aiming for the nipple.** His bottom lip should be aimed as far away from the base of the nipple as possible.
- **When your baby connects with your breast, his chin touches first.** Support his neck and shoulder with your open hand. (Do NOT push his face into your breast.)

With this asymmetrical (off-center) latch, your areola will show above the baby’s top lip, and the baby’s tongue will draw in more of the breast tissue below. Your baby’s chin and lower lip will be close against your breast, and his head slightly tilted back. Don’t use your finger to create an air pocket under the baby’s nose — if it seems that your baby can’t breathe easily at your breast, pull his shoulder closer to you and let his forehead fall slightly away from your breast.

When your baby first nurses, you’ll feel a tugging sensation. Listen for the sound of your baby swallowing. A clicking sound (the baby’s tongue against the roof of his mouth) may mean that your baby isn’t latched on well. Other signs of a poor latch-on are nipple pain or pinching. If you think the latch-on isn’t right, slip your finger into the side of his mouth to break the suction, then reposition and try again. It may take several tries to get the latch-on correct.

Let your baby nurse well on one breast before changing to the other side. Most babies will let go of the breast when they are finished on that side. If you need to remove your baby from your breast to switch him to the other side, gently put your finger into a corner of his mouth to break the suction.
Learning and Growing Together

You and your baby are two different personalities. You both may need a week or two before breastfeeding feels natural. Breastfeeding is a skill you will learn together. How often and how long you breastfeed will change as you and the needs of your baby change.

The first feedings

Think of your first breastfeeding as a special “hello” between you and your new baby. The sooner you get acquainted, the better. Babies are very alert after they are born, and are usually hungry, too! Your baby’s first feeding can be within the first 30 minutes to 2 hours after delivery. If possible, right after delivery, your baby should be placed on your chest or belly, skin to skin, and remain there until he has successfully breastfed.

Some mothers and babies are unable to breastfeed right away. If this is the case for you, be assured that your healthcare providers will help you to build and maintain your milk supply until you have a chance for that first special feeding.

Although your first few breastfeeding sessions may feel awkward, these early feedings encourage milk production and give your baby a healthy start in life. Don’t be shy about asking for help.

Don’t worry if it seems that your baby is only getting a very small amount of milk during these first feedings. In the first three or four days, your baby will only need and receive 1 to 2 teaspoons of colostrum in each feeding. This small amount is enough to nourish your baby. Also, don’t worry if your baby seems hungry again soon after a feeding. It’s normal for newborns to feed frequently and for some of these feedings to be close together. This is often called “cluster feeding.”

The first few days

By the third or fourth day, your milk supply will increase. Your breasts should feel full before feedings and softer afterward. Mother’s milk is easy to digest, so at first your baby may want to eat at least every 2 to 3 hours. Breastfed babies should eat 8 to 12 times or more in a 24-hour period during these early days. Offer the breast frequently, and allow your baby to feed as long as he wants to.

If your baby doesn’t wake up on his own after 3 hours, wake him for a feeding. If he falls asleep within the first few minutes of breastfeeding, take him from the breast and try to wake him so he can nurse for a longer time. To wake your baby for a feeding, try unwrapping him, holding him skin-to-skin, firmly rubbing his back, changing his diaper, or uncovering his hands.

PACIFIERS

The use of pacifiers has been linked to earlier weaning (stopping breastfeeding).

If you choose to use a pacifier, wait until breastfeeding is well established — usually about 3 to 4 weeks — before giving it to your baby. Also, follow these guidelines:

• Use a pacifier after a feeding, not in place of one.
• Keep the pacifier clean.
• Do not tie a pacifier around an infant’s neck. Your baby could strangle.
• If the pacifier becomes torn, cracked, sticky, enlarged, or shows other signs of wear, replace it immediately.
• Use only store-bought pacifiers.
To help maintain your milk supply, offer your baby both breasts at each feeding. However, always allow your baby to finish one breast before you offer the second. Not all babies will take both breasts at each feeding, so switch the side you start on.

Watch your baby for active feeding — this means the whole mouth and jaw are moving in a rhythmic fashion. Try to breastfeed on the first breast long enough to supply hindmilk (released after about 5 to 10 minutes of nursing). Your baby is probably full when the rhythm of the suck is no longer active. At this time, you may want to burp your baby, and then offer the second breast. Let your baby continue nursing as long as she wants — usually 10 to 20 minutes per breast. You should hear swallowing throughout the feeding.

When the pace picks up — growth spurts

When your baby is in an active growing stage, expect more frequent feedings. Your body will naturally meet the extra demand for milk, so you won’t need formula to fill in the extra feedings. In fact, if you give your baby formula at this time, your breasts will not get the message to increase milk production.

Luckily, growth spurts last only for a day or two, and the number of feedings soon returns to normal. Your baby’s first growth spurt may come at 2 or 3 weeks of age. You may notice additional growth spurts as your baby nears 6 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months of age.

About vitamin D

Doctors recommend that all breastfed infants receive a daily supplement of vitamin D, beginning soon after birth. Talk to your doctor about vitamin D for your baby.
When you're breastfeeding, you can't directly see how much milk your baby is taking in. An easy first way to gauge your baby’s milk “input” is to check his “output” — his wet and dirty diapers. As time goes on, you and your baby’s doctor can use weight gain to gauge whether your baby is getting enough nutrition.

Early on

- On the third day of life, your baby should have at least 3 bowel movements in a 24-hour period. Your baby’s first few bowel movements will look dark and sticky, but will gradually become greenish-yellow.
- On the fourth day of life, your baby should have at least 4 mustard-yellow bowel movements and at least 4 wet diapers in a 24-hour period.

Babies younger than 2 months

A baby younger than 2 months will usually:

- Breastfeed 8 to 12 times each day.
- Actively suck and swallow for about 10 to 20 minutes at every feeding. It's important to make sure your baby gets hindmilk. Let her nurse as long as she wants on the first breast before you switch her to the second. (Remember, some babies are satisfied after nursing on one breast, and may not suck very long on the second breast. Just switch the side you start on next time.)
- Have 6 or more wet diapers and 4 or more dirty diapers each day.
- Seem full and satisfied after eating.
- Gain at least 4 to 7 ounces per week.

Babies older than 2 months

A baby older than 2 months will usually:

- Breastfeed 7 or more times per day.
- Be more efficient at emptying the breast, so feeding time is shorter.
- Have 6 or more wet diapers each day. They may continue to have several messy diapers each day or may go several days without one.
- Seem full and satisfied after feeding.

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- Seem full and satisfied after feeding.
Nutrition and General Health

Eating a balanced diet

What you eat and drink is very important when you’re breastfeeding, especially during the first 2 to 3 weeks when your milk supply is becoming established. Don’t diet during this critical time. Follow an eating plan that includes a generous intake (1,800 to 2,200 calories each day) of nutrients from all food groups.

Be sure to make smart choices from each food group now AND all through your life:

- **Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.** Dark green, orange, and yellow vegetables are especially healthy choices.
- **Make most of the grains you eat whole grains.** Examples include whole-wheat bread, brown rice, and oatmeal. These have lots of healthy fiber and nutrients.
- **Choose heart-healthy proteins.** Examples include beans, eggs, low-fat cheese, nut butters, skinless poultry, and lean red meats. Fish is another good protein source, but limit your intake of mercury (common in many sea fish) to no more than 12 ounces a week of halibut, sea bass, swordfish, mackerel, grouper, red snapper, and orange roughy.
- **Select low-fat dairy products.** Go for non-fat or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese. If breastfeeding, you need at least 4 servings of dairy each day.
- **Choose unsaturated fats and oils — and stay away from trans fat.** Read food labels to see what’s inside.
- **Limit salt and sweets.** Most Americans get far too much sodium (salt) in their diet and eat too many sweets. Keep salty and sweet snacks to a minimum — save your appetite for foods with the nutrients you need now.

Once your milk supply is established, gradual weight loss should not interfere with breastfeeding. However, keep in mind that diets less than 1,800 calories a day are often low in vitamins, minerals, and iron and often lead to fatigue and low milk supply. Diets with fewer than 1,500 calories a day — or those that severely limit carbohydrates or fats — are also not recommended at any time while you’re breastfeeding.

What about foods to avoid? Contrary to popular belief, there are no “forbidden foods” for breastfeeding women. Unless you have a food allergy in the family, you should be able to eat everything in moderation — including spicy foods, nuts, dairy, broccoli, and chocolate. Your baby’s occasional fussiness is probably not related to your diet. However, if you’re concerned, you can try eliminating a particular food for a time to see if things improve, or you can talk to your baby’s doctor.
Other recommendations

Fluids
You should drink plenty of fluids. Try to drink at least 8 cups of fluid each day. However, forcing fluids beyond your thirst will not increase your milk supply.

Vitamins
Doctors recommend that all women of childbearing age take a vitamin with at least 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day:

- Before they’re pregnant
- During their pregnancy
- After the baby is born
- Always — if they have any chance of getting pregnant, on purpose or accidentally

Folic acid is important to help prevent certain birth defects. And, it’s good for you. If you have any chance at all of becoming pregnant — take a pill! And, if you were taking prenatal vitamins and/or iron during your pregnancy, keep taking them for the first few months of breastfeeding. But be aware that vitamins don’t take the place of nutritious foods, and they can be dangerous in large amounts. Always take the amount recommended by your doctor.

Vegetarian and vegan diets
If you have chosen to follow a vegetarian diet, you can continue to follow this diet while breastfeeding. Make sure you are consuming enough calories, protein, iron, calcium, vitamin D, and zinc. It’s also important to make sure that your vitamin B12 intake is adequate. This vitamin is only found in animal products. A B12 vitamin supplement is recommended for mothers on strict vegan diets who avoid eggs, milk products, and meat products.

Exercise
Exercising has many health benefits and is recommended during breastfeeding. If you were exercising during pregnancy, it’s safe to continue your exercise routine. Just make sure that you are consuming enough fluids and calories to maintain your milk supply and prevent fatigue. If you’re just beginning an exercise program, get an okay from your doctor. Then, follow safe exercise habits: start slowly and build up gradually, exercise at least 3 days a week, and warm-up prior to exercise. You can breastfeed right after you exercise — there is no need to wait.

Medicine, herbs, and dietary supplements
Before you use any herb, dietary supplement, or medication — prescription or over the counter — ask the advice of your physician, pharmacist, lactation consultant, or dietitian. Some substances and essential oils are not recommended during breastfeeding and can be dangerous. You can also get information from the MothertoBaby helpline (Pregnancy Risk Line) at 1-800-822-BABY (2229).
Prescription pain medicines should be used with caution when breastfeeding. If you have incision pain, you may have been prescribed a narcotic pain reliever such as Tylenol #3, Vicodin, Norco, Percocet, or Lortab. Small infants (less than 6 weeks old or less than 5 pounds) are especially sensitive to narcotics in breast milk and could have trouble breathing or become too sleepy to eat. To reduce this risk, avoid narcotic pain medicines before you breastfeed. After your baby is 5 days old, you can take ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or acetaminophen (Tylenol) for pain. Follow your doctor’s instructions exactly. If your pain is not better and you decide to take a prescribed narcotic, nurse your baby before you take the narcotic. Remember that narcotics are prescribed for incision pain and are NOT intended for pain from engorgement, damaged nipples, or constipation. If your incision pain or cramps suddenly get worse, call your doctor. Remind your doctor that you’re breastfeeding. Finally, never share prescription medicines.

Marijuana and Other Street Drugs
You should not breastfeed if you use any amount of marijuana or other street drugs. These drugs pass into your breast milk. Even a small amount that feels mild to you can make your baby very ill. Talk to your healthcare provider to make a care plan for feeding your baby.

Smoking/nicotine
Smoking is bad for you — and for your baby. It affects mother’s milk, can reduce your supply of milk, and may mean that your baby gets sick more often. So if you smoke, stop as soon as possible. Talk to your doctor, or visit online Freedom from Smoking (ffsonline.org) or Quit for Life (quitnow.net).

If you can’t quit or are in the process of quitting, it’s still best to breastfeed. The benefits of breastfeeding are greater than the risks from your smoking. Just make sure you do these things:

- Don’t let anyone smoke in the house or around your baby.
- Cut down your smoking as much as you can.
- Breastfeed before you smoke, not right afterward.
- When you smoke, cover up with a jacket and pull your hair back.
- Before you breastfeed, take off the shirt or jacket you wore while smoking.

Caffeine
Mother’s milk is only slightly affected by caffeine. Just keep your intake moderate — no more than 3 cups of coffee or tea or soda with caffeine in a day. More than that could make your baby fussy and unable to sleep.

Alcohol
You should limit alcohol to an occasional single drink. Alcohol does pass to your baby when you breastfeed. A newborn’s liver doesn’t work efficiently and will have a hard time clearing the alcohol from his system. Alcohol can also cause your body to make less milk. If you drink, follow these guidelines:

- After a drink, wait at least 2 hours before breastfeeding.
- If you become uncomfortable while waiting to breastfeed after a drink, pump your milk and be sure to discard it. The pumping won’t clear the alcohol from your system any faster. It still takes about 2 hours.
Problem Solving

For the most part, your breasts will take care of themselves. Just rinse them with warm water every day and let them air-dry. Avoid soaps and perfumed cleaners as they may crack your nipples. The best way to prevent problems with your breasts is to stick to regular feedings that keep your milk flowing.

Sore, tender nipples

If your nipples are sore, your baby may not be latching on correctly. When feeding, your baby should grasp onto the areola with a wide-open mouth. You should feel a tug on your nipple but no pinching or pain.

If breastfeeding hurts, try these suggestions:

• **Try different nursing positions.** Switching positions may help decrease nipple soreness. See pages 8 and 9 for ideas.

• **Break the suction when you finish feeding.** Gently put your finger into the corner of your baby’s mouth when you want to remove her from your breast.

• **Don’t allow your baby to chew on your nipple.** Also, don’t allow your baby to sleep holding your nipple in her mouth.

• **Use mother’s milk and lanolin** to soothe and heal sore nipples. After feeding, express (draw or squeeze out) a drop or two of milk and rub it gently onto the nipple. (Mother’s milk is soothing to the nipples and helps with healing.) While the nipple is still moist, apply 100% pure lanolin cream approved for breastfeeding use. This will encourage moist wound healing of your sore nipples and prevent breast pads from sticking.

• **For cracked, scabbed, or bleeding nipples,** contact a lactation consultant to help evaluate the reason for the problem.

• **If your breasts become overly full,** express some milk before breastfeeding. This will soften the breast so that the baby can latch on more easily.

• **Keep your nipples clean and dry.** Use warm water only, and do not use soap on your nipples.

**Breastfeeding should not be painful.**

There may be some discomfort for 1 to 2 days, but if nursing hurts after this time, ask your healthcare provider or lactation consultant for help.

**CALL YOUR DOCTOR or lactation consultant if you:**

• Experience a sudden increase in nipple soreness (with or without a rash) that continues after the end of a breastfeeding session

• Develop cracks or blisters or see blood on your nipples
Flat or inverted nipples

Some women have flat or inverted nipples. Most babies can breastfeed on this kind of nipple without problems because when babies are latched on correctly, they suck on the breast, not the nipple. If needed, try these tips:

- Roll your nipple between your fingers.
- Avoid giving your baby bottles or pacifiers.
- Use a breast pump at the start of a feeding to help draw your nipple out.

Engorgement

It is common for your breasts to feel fuller 2 to 3 days after your baby’s birth. This is a wonderful sign that your milk is coming in. If your breasts become so full that they are very hard and lumpy, you are experiencing engorgement (swelling). You may feel discomfort from engorgement and it can flatten your nipples so that it’s difficult for your baby to latch on. With frequent feedings, engorgement usually goes away in a day or two.

If you have engorgement, try these suggestions:

- **Continue to breastfeed often** — at least every 2 hours. Whenever breasts feel hard and full, breastfeed or pump until they feel softer.
- **Apply warm, moist heat** (such as a warm, wet washcloth) to the nipple and areola for about 5 minutes before feedings. Do not apply heat to the upper portion of the breast because this may cause more swelling.
- **To encourage letdown, massage your breasts**, gently stroking the breast from the outer portion of the breast toward the nipple.
- **If your nipples flatten** and your infant has trouble latching on, squeeze or pump out enough milk to soften the areola and restore nipple shape.
- **If your baby is too sleepy to nurse** for very long, try switching breasts more often, changing his diaper, or firmly rubbing his back. If your baby falls asleep after nursing on only one breast, pump the other breast.
- **Apply washed, cool, slightly crushed green cabbage leaves** to your breasts after breastfeeding, three times a day for 15 minutes. (First, roll over the cabbage leaves with a rolling pin, and when you put them on your breasts, don’t cover the nipples.) You can also try cold packs (bags of frozen peas or crushed ice, wrapped in a thin towel). Don’t keep the leaves or cold packs on longer than 15 minutes, however. They can reduce your milk supply.
- **Use Tylenol or ibuprofen** for pain control.
- **Wear a bra with additional support.**

Do not use a nipple shield over your nipple unless advised to do so by a lactation consultant.

CALL YOUR DOCTOR or lactation consultant if:

Your baby continues to have trouble latching on after you try the suggestions described in this booklet.

Limiting the amount of water you drink will not reduce engorgement.
If you have a plugged milk duct, continue to breastfeed. If you stop, the plugged duct may get worse and lead to a breast infection.

If you think you have a plugged milk duct, try these suggestions:

- **Continue to breastfeed.** This helps clear the blockage and prevent infection.

- **Increase the emptying of the tender breast.** Start each feeding with the tender breast, and for the first 24 hours, nurse or pump at least every 2 to 3 hours.

- **Begin each feeding by applying a warm, moist cloth** to the blocked area for 5 to 10 minutes.

- **Try a warm shower** to help your milk flow better.

- **Position your baby at the breast** so that his chin or nose is pointed to the tender area — this may help to empty your breast.

- As the baby nurses or you pump, **gently massage from behind the blocked areas toward your nipple.**

- If your baby’s feeding does not soften your breast, **hand express or pump until your breast feels soft.**

- **Avoid anything that might block the flow of your milk** (such as tight or under-wire bras, baby carriers, or holding the breast too tight).

- **Increase the amount of fluids you drink.** Nursing mothers should drink about 8 to 10 glasses of water each day.
**Breast infection (mastitis)**

Mastitis is a swelling and infection of the breast tissue and glands — not an infection of your milk. Most breast infections result from missed feedings or not frequently emptying your breasts, leading to milk build-up. You are also more likely to develop a breast infection if you have damaged nipples or plugged ducts — or if your defenses are lowered by lack of rest, poor diet, or stress.

Symptoms of a breast infection may include flu-like symptoms (such as chills, body aches, fatigue, headache, and fever above 100.4° F), and a throbbing pain in one breast. In addition, an area of your breast may be red and painful to the touch, or the skin may look tight and shiny.

**If you have a breast infection, do the following:**

- **Continue to breastfeed!** By moving your milk through the breast frequently, breastfeeding may actually relieve the problem. If you stop nursing, mastitis will get worse.

- **Call your healthcare provider for antibiotics.** (Note: Be aware that a frequent side effect of antibiotics is an overgrowth of yeast. See the next page for information on yeast infections.)

- **Concentrate on getting better and nursing your baby.** Find someone to help out with other children and household chores so you can go to bed and rest.

- **Nurse or pump at least every 2 to 3 hours for the first 24 hours.** Start each feeding with the sore breast.

- **Apply a warm, moist cloth to the area before each feeding.** This helps to increase the flow of milk and the blood supply to the infected area.

- **Drink enough fluids** to make your urine pale yellow.

- **For pain relief,** try Tylenol or ibuprofen, or take other pain medicine as prescribed.

If you decide to discontinue breastfeeding, gradually reduce the number of daily feedings. **DO NOT** stop breastfeeding suddenly.
Yeast infections

Sometimes a yeast infection can develop on the mother’s breast or in the baby’s mouth. Some yeast infections are noticeable only in the mother, and some are noticeable only in the baby. However, since the breastfeeding mother and the baby can re-infect each other, **both mother and baby need medicine.**

**Symptoms**

- **In your baby:** A yeast infection in a baby’s mouth is called **thrush**. Thrush may appear as white or grayish-white, slightly raised patches that look like milk curds on the tongue, throat, inside of the cheeks, or the lips. These patches cling and will not wipe or rinse off easily. If they are wiped off, they leave the underlying tissue raw and possibly make it bleed.

- **In you:** Yeast infections can cause your nipples to crack, itch, or burn. Nipples can become red, swollen, and painful. Some mothers also develop breast pain.

**YEAST INFECTION TREATMENTS FOR YOUR BABY**

- To treat thrush in the baby’s mouth, your doctor will prescribe a liquid medicine called Nystatin. Follow the package directions to gently rub the medicine on your baby’s tongue, cheeks, and gums. This is usually done after a feeding, 4 times a day for 2 weeks.

- If you are using a breast pump, pacifier, or bottle nipple, you must boil it for 20 minutes, run it through a dishwasher, or use a micro-steam sanitizer each day. Note that boiling may wear down bottle nipples and pacifiers, so you may have to use new ones after one week of boiling.

- Wash your baby’s toys often in hot, soapy water to prevent your baby from becoming re-infected.

- To treat a yeast diaper rash, you doctor will prescribe an ointment that you will apply to the diaper area at least 4 times a day for 2 weeks. You should also try not to use diaper wipes from stores. Instead, use clear water and non-scented tissues or washcloths and pat dry. Soaking the diaper area in warm water for 5 to 10 minutes, 4 times a day, and then letting your baby’s bottom air dry, can also be soothing for your baby.
CALL YOUR DOCTOR if you:

• Think you or your baby has a yeast infection

• Have a yeast infection that does not go away with the treatments discussed here (your doctor may prescribe a stronger medicine to be taken in pill form)

BREASTFEEDING AND BIRTH CONTROL

• Breastfeeding is NOT a guarantee against pregnancy. You need to use birth control as soon as you are ready to be intimate again after the birth of your baby.

• Consult with your doctor or health care provider to help you choose a birth control method that will work best for you during the time you’re breastfeeding.

• NOTE: You should not use time-release hormones (such as birth control shots or patches) until your milk supply is well-established. This usually takes 3 to 4 weeks. Also, some time-released hormones may lead to decreased milk supply. See A Guide to Caring for Yourself for a summary of birth control options.

YEAST INFECTION TREATMENTS FOR YOU

Rinse your nipples with warm, clear water after breastfeeding. A water and vinegar mixture may be even more effective than plain water. Mix 1 tablespoon vinegar in 1 cup of water. Pat your nipple dry with a soft towel when you’re done. Do not rub your milk into your nipples. Yeast thrives on the natural sugars in mother’s milk.

• Apply a thin layer of antifungal cream to your nipples and areola after each feeding for 14 days or as otherwise instructed by your doctor. Usually the cream is absorbed into the skin between feedings. However, if you notice any extra cream, remove it with a wet cotton ball before breastfeeding.

• Since yeast thrives in a dark, moist environment, change your breast pads or bra whenever they become wet with milk. Use cotton bras and breast pads (without waterproof linings) because they allow air to reach the nipples.

• Wash your bras, nightclothes, sheets, towels, and washcloths in hot water daily.

• Wash your hands after you use the bathroom or change your baby’s diaper.

• If you’re expressing your milk, you can still feed freshly expressed milk to your baby. However, because of the risk of reinfection, it may not be wise to freeze the milk for later use.
Pumping and Storing Your Milk

You can transfer milk from your breasts into a bottle by **hand expressing** or **pumping** (pumping means to express milk with the help of a mechanical or electric breast pump). Hand expressing or pumping your milk can give your partner and others a chance to feed your baby. It can also free you up and make activities outside the home possible for you including returning to work or school. If breast pumping is not possible, use formula during work or other activities, and breastfeed while you’re at home.

### Hand expressing

Hand expression can help your milk come in faster — and, in combination with pumping, can help you increase milk production later on. Hand expression is also easy and economical. You can do it without any special equipment.

Your first tries at hand expression may not produce much milk, but with practice you’ll see improvement.

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### How to hand express

1. **Wash your hands and your collection cup thoroughly.**

2. **Stimulate milk flow.** Try the following:
   - Apply a warm, moist towel to the breasts for 1 to 3 minutes. (A warm shower will also work.)
   - Massage your breast using small, circular motions. Move your fingers around the breast, working from your chest down toward your nipple.
   - Massage for at least 2 minutes, then repeat on your other breast.
   - Relax and think of your baby.

3. **Collect your milk by doing the following:**
   - Place your finger and thumb about 1 to 1½ inches behind the base of the nipple.
   - Gently lift, then press the breast back toward your chest while compressing your fingers together toward the nipple. Relax and let go.
   - Repeat the press-compress-relax motion several times before switching to the other breast.
   - As you alternate sides and the milk begins to flow, collect it in a tube, spoon, or cup so that it can be easily fed to your baby.
   - Continue working around your breast to reach all of the milk sacs.

You can also try hand expressing from one breast while feeding your infant from the other. Your baby’s suckling will stimulate your milk flow and make it even easier to hand express.
Pumping

Most mothers can begin pumping 5 to 7 days after delivery. Plan to begin pumping your milk for at least 2 to 3 weeks before returning to work or school. If you and your baby are separated, begin pumping within 6 hours.

It’s important to pump your breasts as often as you would be nursing (at least every 3 to 4 hours). Try to mimic your baby’s feeding pattern and express both breasts at each time. Pump any time you feel you have extra milk. One of the easiest times to pump is whenever the baby only nurses on one side — you can then pump the other side. Some mothers even pump while their babies nurse.

What will happen when I’m separated from my baby?

When you start back to work, some babies have a normal period of adjustment that may include a lack of appetite and an increase in fussiness. They will soon make the adjustment.

Breastfeed as soon as you return from work and frequently when at home with your baby. This will help maintain your milk supply.

Many mothers find that the stress of returning to work or school causes a temporary decrease in milk supply. Having a supply of frozen mother’s milk will help you through this period.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PUMPING:

- Wash your hands before pumping.
- Pump until your flow of milk slows or stops — about 10 to 20 minutes if you are using a double-electric pump. You will need to pump longer if you are using a small pump or a hand pump.
- After each use, wash any piece of the pump kit that touches your breast or holds milk. Use hot, soapy water and follow the pump manufacturer’s instructions.

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Pumping at work

No matter where you work or what type of job you have, you should be able to pump your milk while you’re at work. It just takes a bit of planning and preparation. Here are a few tips:

- Prepare with your employer. Before you go back to work, tell your employer that you’re breastfeeding, and that when you’re at work, you’ll need to pump throughout the day. Ask where you can pump (it should be clean and private) and where you can store the milk. Discuss how you can fit pumping into your workday. And make sure your employer knows the facts: studies show that breastfeeding mothers miss work less often than other new moms! If your supervisor can’t meet your needs, check with your Human Resources department.
- Start pumping before you go back to work — 2 to 3 weeks before, if possible. This way, you can build up a supply of frozen mother’s milk for the first few days. Also, make sure your baby gets some practice drinking expressed milk from a bottle.
- When you’re at work, pump about every 3 to 4 hours. Try to mimic your baby’s feeding pattern. If you don’t pump often enough, you could have problems with leaking and blocked milk ducts.
- If you have a double pump, pump both breasts at the same time. This will cut down on pumping time and make the most of your body’s natural letdown reflex.
- Think of your baby! Thinking of your baby while you pump will help with letdown — and remind you of the gift you’re giving your baby by continuing to breastfeed.
Choosing a pump

Breast pumps range from simple hand pumps to deluxe double-electric pumps. They can be bought or rented. Check with your insurance provider — many policies will help pay for pump rental or purchase. The type of pump you choose depends on the quality you want and how often you will be pumping. If you will be away from your baby often, it’s wise to choose a high-quality pump. This will help you keep a good milk supply.

You may have received a list of pump suppliers from the hospital where you delivered. You can also look for breast pump suppliers by searching for your region and “breastfeeding” or “breast pumps” online. You may want to talk about pumping with a lactation consultant.

Did you know?

It’s cheaper to rent or buy a quality pump than to buy formula.

Types of pumps

HAND PUMPS
With a hand pump, your muscles supply the power.
Hand pumps are small and inexpensive, but they take longer to use than other pump styles such as electric pumps. These pumps can work well to draw out inverted nipples or to relieve mild engorgement. A hand pump may be all you need if you are only away from your baby once in a while or for a few hours at a time.

SMALL ELECTRIC / BATTERY PUMPS
These are hand-held devices that are best for occasional use. They are less expensive than the larger pumps and are easily portable. Some women find them more convenient to use than hand pumps. They are not as effective as larger pumps, and may have problems with poor suction from battery failure. With most of these pumps, you must release the suction frequently while pumping to prevent nipple damage.

PERSONAL, DAILY USE ELECTRIC PUMPS
These are the most efficient of the personal pumps. Although not designed to help establish a woman’s milk supply, these daily use breast pumps are good for moms who pump several times a day. Personal electric breast pumps offer portable convenience for discreet pumping anywhere and can effectively pump both breasts at the same time. (These pumps should not be shared, loaned, or used secondhand; they are meant for a single user.)

HOSPITAL-GRADE PUMPS
With technology that closely mimics the natural sucking motion of an infant, hospital-grade pumps are excellent for establishing and maintaining a woman’s milk supply. They can efficiently empty both breasts at the same time, are easy to use, and are comfortable. They are more expensive to buy, but can be rented. This is the best kind of pump for you if you work full-time, are separated from your baby because of illness, are trying to increase your milk supply, or need to relieve severe engorgement.
Breast milk can be safely refrigerated for 5 days or frozen for a longer period of time.

These storage guidelines are for healthy newborns. If your baby is hospitalized, you’ll receive special instructions on pumping and storing your milk. For example, milk for most preterm babies should only be stored for 48 hours in the fridge.

Storing mother’s milk

You can store your milk in glass or plastic bottles, resealable freezer bags, or plastic bags made especially for storing mother’s milk. Disposable bottle liners may also be used, but be aware that freezer odors can seep into the milk, and water can evaporate out of the milk.

More tips for storing your milk:

- Store milk in 2- to 4-ounce containers. Storing small amounts — especially at first — may mean you don’t have to throw away milk when your baby doesn’t drink much.
- Leave some room at the top when filling the container, since milk expands when frozen.
- Label all containers with the date the milk was expressed. If your baby takes your milk in a hospital NICU, a day care, or some other place outside your home, also put your baby’s name on the container. Be sure to check the label before preparing stored milk for your baby or bringing it home from the hospital.
- The storage containers must have an airtight seal. Use screw-on lids, not nipples, on the bottles.
- Never add warm milk to cold or frozen milk. If you need to combine milk to have enough for a feeding, cool the warm milk first.
- If you don’t plan to use the milk within 2 days, freeze it.
- Chill your milk as soon as possible after it’s expressed.
- Mother’s milk stored in the refrigerator should be used within 5 days — don’t freeze it after this time.

Tips for using stored mother’s milk:

- Always use the oldest milk first.
- Defrost or warm milk by placing the container of milk in a bowl of warm tap water.
- Allow 12 hours to slowly defrost milk in the refrigerator.
- NEVER use a microwave or boiling water to warm milk. A bottle warmer is okay to use, but be sure to follow the manufacturer’s directions for safe use.
- Gently swirl the milk to blend in the cream layer.
- If your baby does not finish the bottle of milk, throw the rest away — DO NOT REUSE.
Introducing the bottle

If breastfeeding has been going well, you can introduce your baby to a bottle around 2 to 4 weeks of age. After breastfeeding is well established, most babies can switch back and forth from the breast to a bottle without problems. You may need to try different kinds of bottle nipples to find one that your baby likes. To help your baby take mother’s milk (or formula) from a bottle, offer the bottle when the baby is neither too full nor too hungry.

Once your baby is taking a bottle, continue to offer it 2 to 3 times each week until you go back to work or school. Do not give a bottle more than once a day, and give only an ounce or so at a time. This will help avoid problems with your milk supply and keep your baby interested in nursing.

It may be best if someone other than the mother feeds your baby her bottle.

LABEL THE MILK — CHECK THE LABEL

- Write the date the milk was expressed. Later on, this will tell you how long the milk has been stored.
- Write your baby’s name on the label. If your baby takes milk in the hospital, a day care, or elsewhere outside your home, this helps prevent a mix-up. You want to be sure your baby gets your milk.
- Check the label before preparing the milk for your baby or taking stored milk home with you from the hospital or day care.

GUIDELINES FOR STORING MOTHER’S MILK FOR HEALTHY NEWBORNS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Milk that is…</th>
<th>Time at room temp (66°F to 77°F)</th>
<th>Time in an insulated box/bag (using blue ice)</th>
<th>Time in refrigerator (32°F to 39°F)</th>
<th>Time in freezer (Not in the door)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Freshly pumped</td>
<td>Up to 6 hours</td>
<td>Up to 24 hours</td>
<td>Up to 5 days</td>
<td>Up to 6 months (up to 12 months if in deep freeze -4°F)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thawed in refrigerator (but not warmed)</td>
<td>Up to 4 hours after milk is completely thawed</td>
<td>Up to 12 hours</td>
<td>Up to 24 hours</td>
<td>Do NOT re-freeze thawed milk</td>
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Guidelines recommended by the Human Milk Banking Association of North America, Fort Worth, Texas
A Note About Weaning

Weaning yourself and your baby from breastfeeding is a natural stage in your baby’s development. Each mother must decide for herself when and how to begin weaning. It is a decision based on many factors — your baby’s needs, your needs, and your home and work situation. You should base your decision on these needs, not on the expectations of others. When you do decide to wean your baby, a gradual, planned weaning is easiest for both of you. You may start by eliminating one feeding daily, no more often than every 2 or 3 days. This allows your milk supply to decrease slowly, without fullness and discomfort. You might also decide to do partial weaning — for example, eliminating 1 or 2 feedings daily, but continuing with other feedings. This often works for moms returning to work who do not plan to pump. Keep in mind that after you stop nursing, it can take a month or two for your milk to go away completely.

Breastfeeding Log

Whether you are first getting started with breastfeeding — or want reassurance that your baby is getting enough milk — you may want to keep track of feeding times. There are many ways to keep track of feedings, including phone apps and written logs. The log on the following pages provides a place for you to record details such as how long and how often you are feeding your baby and how many wet or messy diapers your baby has. This information can help you and your healthcare providers figure out where adjustments can be made, if necessary. Feel free to make additional copies if you want to keep a log for a longer period of time.
## Breastfeeding Log

Offer your baby the breast every 2 to 3 hours.

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<th>Day</th>
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**Daily Totals:**

**Wet Diapers:** 1 2 3 4 5 6

**Stools (“poops”):** 1 2 3 4 5 6

**Consistency/Color:**

Your breastfed baby should have at least 1 wet diaper & 1 messy diaper on the first day of life; 2 wet diapers & 2 messy diapers on the second day; 3 wet diapers & 3 messy diapers on the third day, and 4 wet diapers & 4 mustard-yellow stools (“poops”) on the fourth and following days.

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<th>Stools (&quot;poops&quot;):</th>
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Summary of When to Seek Medical Help

Call your baby’s doctor

Pay attention to the number of wet and messy diapers your newborn makes. Too few may signal a problem. **Call your baby’s doctor today if you notice any of the following:**

- **ON the 1st day of life,** your baby doesn’t have at least 1 wet diaper and 1 messy diaper in a 24-hour period
- **ON the 2nd day of life,** fewer than 2 wet diapers and 2 messy diapers in a 24-hour period
- **ON the 3rd day of life,** fewer than 3 wet diapers and 3 messy diapers in a 24-hour period
- **ON the 4th day of life,** your breastfed baby has fewer than 4 wet diapers and fewer than 4 mustard-yellow stools (“poops”) in a 24-hour period
- **AFTER the 4th day of life:** your breastfed baby has fewer than 6 wet diapers and fewer than 4 mustard-yellow stools (“poops”) in a 24-hour period
- **IN the first 2 months:** NO MESSY DIAPERS AT ALL IN A 24-HOUR PERIOD
- **Sudden changes in bowel movements** combined with irritability, poor eating, or other concerns
- **Diarrhea,** or stool that’s watery, green, foul-smelling, or contains mucus or blood
- **Signs of discomfort with urination** or failure to urinate within 24 hours of a circumcision
- **Jaundice** (a yellow appearance) that does not go away, or spreads to cover more of her body
- **Poor eating** (for example, refusal to eat at all, or consistently sleeping 5 to 6 hours between feedings)
- **Thrush** — white or grayish-white, slightly raised patches that look like milk curds on the tongue, throat, inside of the cheeks, or the lips
- **Any overall change in activity or temperament**

Call your doctor

If your baby has trouble latching on or you have other problems with breastfeeding, talk to your doctor or lactation consultant. **Call your doctor if you notice any of the following:**

- **Your milk has not come in** by the morning of the 5th day (no change in your breasts)
- **You have extremely painful nipples** or cracks blisters or blood on your nipples
- **You have a sudden increase in nipple soreness** (with or without a rash) that continues after the end of a breastfeeding session
- **You have throbbing pain** in one breast, or a part of your breast becomes red and extremely painful to the touch
- **You have flu-like symptoms** (chills, body aches, fatigue, or headache)
- **You have a fever of 100.4°F (38.0°C) or greater**
- **You have a breast infection that doesn’t get better** after 24 hours of being treated with antibiotics
- **You have plugged milk ducts that don’t go away or that keep coming back,** despite measures described on page 19
- **You or your baby has a yeast infection, or your yeast infection doesn’t go away** even after treatments described on page 22