



# The First Days

## Get Off to a Good Start

Let your doctor and nurse know that you are planning to breastfeed. Protect your milk supply by asking to room-in with your baby and by avoiding pacifiers and bottles. Holding baby skin-to-skin can help with milk production. The more often you nurse, the more milk you will make.

## The First Feeding

Right after delivery, hold your baby skin-to-skin, with baby on your belly or chest, and progress to the first feeding when baby is alert. If you have a Caesarean section, breastfeed as soon as you are able.

The first milk, called colostrum, is made in small amounts to match the size of your baby's belly. It is what you'll make in the first few days and it's all your baby needs for a healthy start. If you nurse early and often, your breasts will feel fuller and you'll have more milk by the end of the first week.

## How to Breastfeed

Feed your baby when she is hungry, rather than on a schedule. Stretching, rapid eye movement, and hand-to-mouth movement are all signs of hunger. Crying is a late sign of hunger, and your baby will be frustrated and more difficult to feed if you wait until she cries.

Support your breast with one hand. Use your other hand to support your baby's neck and shoulders so that baby can latch closely, and bring the baby to your breast. Place pillows underneath baby for your comfort as needed. Hold your baby so his tummy touches yours.

When your baby sucks more slowly or comes off on his own, you can switch sides. If you have pain, take baby off the breast by sliding one finger into the corner of baby's mouth and break the suction. Then, try latching the baby again.



Tickle your baby's lips with your nipple until her mouth opens wide. Bring your baby close with her nose aimed towards your nipple, so that when she latches, the nipple points toward the roof of her mouth.

Give your baby as much of your breast as possible, and offer her more of the bottom part than the top. Make sure he is latching onto more than just your nipple, and both lips are flipped out.

## How to Tell if Your Baby is Getting Enough Milk

Your baby should breastfeed at least 8 to 12 times in 24 hours. Newborns have tiny stomachs, so they can't hold a lot of milk at one time. Young babies usually nurse every 1-2 hours. You should see and hear your baby suck and swallow as he nurses.

By the fourth or fifth day, newborns should have 4-6 wet disposable diapers and at least 4 dirty diapers a day. After the first month, some babies have fewer dirty diapers.

All babies lose a little weight after birth. If your baby is feeding well, she should be back up to her birth weight by two weeks of age.

If you have any concerns call your nutritionist, breastfeeding specialist or doctor.

### It's normal to have questions!

Many moms have questions about breastfeeding. Sometimes it's great to talk to someone who's already done it. Be sure to ask about the WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program. If you have a Peer Counselor, be sure to call her so she can be there for you.

If you have challenges or questions, reach for the phone before reaching for a bottle. Breastfeeding should not hurt. If you feel any pain or discomfort when you nurse, contact a nutritionist or breastfeeding specialist right away. She can often help you solve the problem by changing the way your baby latches onto your breast.

Breastfeeding is not always easy at first, but it won't take long before you and your baby know just what to do! Congratulations on your start to breastfeeding; this is a special bonding experience that only the two of you can share.

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