

## The importance of breastfeeding

- After you have delivered your baby, you will hold your baby skin to skin. This contact between mother and baby is very important to the baby and to the mother's wellbeing.
- Your baby will likely want to breastfeed within 1 hour of birth.
- You are encouraged to breastfeed for the first six months
- Breast milk is still important after 6 months of age - even when you are feeding your baby other food.
- Hand expression is an easy way to remove milk from the breast. This expressed milk may be given to your baby. A breast pump may be helpful in certain situations.

## How often should you breastfeed?

Often! Babies need to eat at least 8 to 12 times every 24 hours to make plenty of milk for your baby. This means the newborn baby will eat frequently. Watch for feeding cues and feed your baby on cue.

## How long should feedings be?

There is no set time. Your baby will let you know when he or she is finished. Watch for your baby's hands to relax.

## Learn your baby's hunger signs or feeding cues

- When babies are hungry, they become more alert and active.
- They may put their hands or fists to their mouths, make sucking motions with their mouth, or turn their head looking for the breast.
- If anything touches the baby's cheek – such as a hand - the baby may turn toward the hand, ready to eat. This sign of hunger is called rooting.
- Offer your breast when your baby shows rooting signs.
- Crying can be a late sign of hunger, and it may be harder to latch once the baby is upset.
- Over time, you will learn your baby's cues.
- Keep your baby skin to skin as much as you are able.

## Follow your baby's lead

Make sure you are both comfortable and follow your baby's lead after he or she is latched well. Some babies take both breasts at each feeding. Others take only one breast at a feeding. Let your baby feed on the first breast as long as he or she is still sucking and swallowing. This will ensure the baby gets the milk that is higher in fat at the end of the feeding. Your baby will let go of the breast when he or she is finished and often falls asleep. Offer the other breast if he or she seems to want more.

## Keep your baby close to you

Remember that your baby is not used to this new world and needs to be held very close to mom. Skin to skin helps babies cry less. Have your baby sleep in a crib or bassinet in your room so that you can breastfeed more easily at night.

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## Avoid nipple confusion

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that pacifiers be avoided for the first month or until after breastfeeding is well established. Pacifiers can interfere with latch and milk supply.

## Know when to wake baby

In the early weeks after birth, you should wake your baby to feed if 4 hours have passed since the beginning of the last feeding.

## Tips for waking the baby

- Changing your baby's diaper
- Placing your baby skin to skin
- Massaging your baby's back, abdomen, and legs

If your baby is falling asleep at the breast during most feedings, talk to the baby's doctor about a weight check

## How to know your baby is getting enough milk

Most babies lose a small amount of weight in the first days after birth. Make sure to visit your baby's doctor within three days after birth. Your baby's weight will be checked to see if your baby is gaining the right amount. Keep your appointments for your baby.

You can tell if your baby is getting plenty of milk if your baby is content and gaining weight steadily after the first week. From birth to three months, typical weight gain is about 1 ounce each day.

## Other signs your baby is getting plenty of milk

- Urine is clear and pale yellow. Expect as many wet diapers as baby is days old. 6-8 wet diapers by day 6.
- Bowel movements, 3 or more a day, should be soft and yellow.
- Your baby switches between short sleeping periods and wakeful, alert periods.
- Your baby is satisfied and content after feedings.
- Your breasts feel softer after you feed your baby.

## How much do babies typically eat?

A newborn's tummy is very small, especially in the early days. Once breastfeeding is established, exclusively breastfed babies from 1 to 6 months of age take in between 19 and 30 ounces per day. If you breastfeed 8 times per day, the baby would eat around 3 ounces per feeding. Older babies will take less breast milk as other food is introduced after 6 months. At birth, the baby's stomach can comfortably digest about 1 to 2 teaspoons at a time. In the first week, the baby's stomach is about the size of a walnut. Talk to your baby's doctor if you are worried that your baby is not eating enough.

## Does my baby need cereal or water?

Your baby only needs breast milk for the first six months of life. Breast milk alone will provide all the nutrition your baby needs. Your baby does not need cereal until they are six months old. Even in hot climates, breastfed infants do not need water or juice.

## Bowel movements

You can expect at least one dark tar like stool in the first 24 hours. The first week after your baby's birth, the stool color will change to and from many colors: dark to yellow and the texture will change also: watery, seedy and loose to firm.