

Breastfeeding: Baby's Best Start



Benefits for Mother

- May help in weight loss after delivery
- Always ready, no mixing or heating
- Less expensive
- Safe, simple, natural feeding method
- Decreases risk of breast and ovarian cancer
- Helps body get back into shape faster
- Fewer doctor visits with a sick baby

Benefits for Baby

- Closeness between mother and baby
- Best nutrition
- Decreases illnesses such as diarrhea, constipation, breathing problems and earaches
- Fresh, clean, right temperature
- First immunizations
- Easy for baby to digest
- Fewer allergy problems

Doctors, nurses and nutritionists around the world agree that breastmilk is the only food a baby needs for the first 6 months of life. No other food helps baby grow normally *and* protects baby against many common illnesses.

- Any amount of breastfeeding is good for your baby. The more your baby gets, the greater the benefits.
- The first two weeks are the hardest. You are recovering from childbirth and getting to know your baby. Breastfeeding and getting plenty of rest can help you get used to being a mother.
- Unless there is a medical problem, babies do not need water, formula or pacifiers in the first month. They can get everything they need by breastfeeding.
- Doctors, nurses, nutritionists and lactation consultants are here to help you and your baby learn good breastfeeding skills. Feel free to call on them for help.

Preparing During Pregnancy

- Breasts get larger and may leak. This is normal. Your body is getting ready to breastfeed.
- Learn about breastfeeding. Take a class or go to a mother-to-mother group meeting.
- Talk with your employer about maternity leave and how to support breastfeeding when you come back to work.

In Hospital

- Breastfeed baby as soon as possible after delivery — within the first hour if you can.
- Keep baby in your room with you. This helps you get to know your baby. You can also breastfeed at the first sign of hunger (hands to mouth, licking lips, squirming). Pick the baby up, change the diaper and put to the breast before crying begins.
- Put baby to breast at least every 1½ — 3 hours during the day. Babies have small stomachs and need to eat often.
- Avoid formula, water, bottle nipples or pacifiers unless asked for by your doctor or your doctor tells you to give them to your baby.
- Ask for help with learning to breastfeed. Both you and your baby are learning a new skill.
- Ask for pain relief if needed. Most pain medications are safe to take as directed.

At Home

- Baby needs to eat about 8—12 times in 24 hours. This is about every 1½ - 3 hours during the day. Most adults eat this often, too!
- A single breastfeeding lasts about 15—20 minutes on one breast. You should see active sucking and swallowing.
- Finish the first breast first. If baby is still hungry, offer the second side.
- Take care of yourself!
 - ◆ Rest or sleep when the baby sleeps.
 - ◆ Have something to drink or a snack when you sit down to breastfeed.
 - ◆ Get help around the house from family and friends.

Frequently Asked Questions

What about bottles?

Babies move their mouths a different way when they feed from a bottle. In the first month, many babies have a hard time learning both breastfeeding and bottle feeding. Often babies may come to prefer bottle feeding. Help your baby learn to breastfeed for about a month before giving a bottle. Use slow flow nipples.

What about pacifiers?

Like bottles, babies suck on pacifiers differently than they suck on the breast. In the first month, babies need to get food at the same time as sucking. They can do both at the same time during breastfeeding. Talk with your doctor about offering a pacifier after the first month.

What about formula or water?

Your body can make enough milk to take care of your baby's needs for the first 6 months of life. When you breastfeed, your body gets the signal to make more milk. Every time a baby has a meal that is not by breastfeeding, your body gets the signal that it doesn't need to make as much milk. The more often you feed, and the emptier the breast, the more milk you will make. This will gradually slow down your supply.

Giving formula can also increase the chance that baby will have a food allergy. Many moms have to try different formulas before they find one that will work for the baby.

What about pumping my breasts?

No pump is better than a baby that really knows how to breastfeed! Once your milk supply is strong and the baby breastfeeds well, you could start some pumping. This can be very helpful if you are going back to school or work.

Talk with your lactation consultant, nutritionist, or nurse about choosing a good quality pump, how and when to use. Pumping takes extra time. It is best done *along with* breastfeeding, not *instead of* breastfeeding.

What about breastfeeding in public?

Some mothers are nervous about breastfeeding in front of other people. This is okay. With practice, you can feel more comfortable.

- Try practicing latching on and off at home in front of a mirror.
- Wear baggy tops to cover baby during feedings or use a light blanket as a cover up.
- If needed, find a private place to breastfeed, such as a department store fitting room. A bathroom is not a good option.
- Kentucky law protects breastfeeding mothers from harassment.



Breastfeeding Welcome Here



For more information on breastfeeding, talk with your Nutritionist or Nurse and the Lactation Consultant at the hospital where you had your baby.

