

Breastfeeding: Growing Healthy Babies & Moms

Helps Moms

- Safe, simple, normal feeding method
- Always ready, no mixing or heating
- Weight loss after pregnancy
- Decreases risk of breast and ovarian cancer
- Helps body get back into shape faster
- Fewer doctor visits with a sick baby

Protection for Baby

- Closeness between mother and baby
- Breastmilk promotes brain growth
- Decreases illnesses such as diarrhea, constipation, breathing problems and infections
- Breastmilk may keep your child from becoming overweight later in life.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends babies receive only breastmilk for about the first 6 months of life and continue to receive breastmilk along with other foods until at least one year of age. Breastfeeding should continue for as long as mother and baby wish.

- Any amount of breastfeeding is good for your baby. The more your baby gets, the greater the benefits.
- Many moms and babies breastfeed without any problems. Other moms may need a little help.
- Breastfeed your baby at least 8-12 times per day during the first 4-6 weeks. Avoid formula supplements. This can limit the amount of breastmilk that you make.
- Nurses, nutritionists and lactation consultants are here to help you and your baby learn breastfeeding skills. Ask them for help.

Preparing During Pregnancy

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

In Hospital

- Breastfeed your baby within the first hour after delivery. Have skin-to-skin contact immediately after delivery.
- Keep your baby in the 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, yawning).
- Put baby to breast at least every 1 1/2-3 hours during the day. Babies have small stomachs and need to eat often.
- Do not give formula unless there is a medical need. Avoid bottle nipples or pacifiers.
- Ask for help with breastfeeding. Both you and your baby are learning a new skill.

At Home

- Your baby needs to eat about 8-12 times in 24 hours. This is about every 1 1/2-3 hours during the day.
- Finish the first breast before offering the other side. Try to burp. Always offer your baby both breasts at a feeding. Don't worry if your baby only takes one side. At the next feeding, start with the last breast first.
- You should see active, rhythmic sucking and swallowing when your baby nurses.
- 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.



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