



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Ministry of Health and Seniors
Department of Health

Breastfeeding Your Baby



Your baby's healthy growth and development depend on the food provided. Breastfeeding provides an ideal balanced diet with the comfort and security of being held and loved. This is important for both you and your baby.

Information from La Leche League

ADVANTAGES OF BREASTFEEDING

- It is affordable, sterile and convenient. It is easier during night feeds or when traveling.
- It helps you return to pre-pregnancy weight.

ADVANTAGES OF BREASTMILK

- It is easier to digest than infant formula.
- Provides mother's antibodies to protect baby from illnesses such as gastroenteritis or respiratory infections.
- Reduces risk of baby developing allergies.
- Studies suggest breastfed babies have a high IQ level.

SHOULD I GIVE EXTRA FLUIDS IN HOT WEATHER

Breast milk's water content is sufficient enough to satisfy your baby's thirst. It is not necessary to give extra fluids as long as you feed your baby on demand.

WHICH BREAST TO START

The supply of breast milk is triggered by the baby's sucking. It is important to alternate breasts after a feed. Empty the first breast before you begin feeding from the second. This will make sure that each breast is stimulated at regular intervals.

BREAST MILK PRODUCTION

During pregnancy your breasts prepare for the arrival of your baby. After your baby is born, a special hormone causes your breasts to make milk

Colostrum is the first milk that is produced during pregnancy. It is full of antibodies that provide immunities and essential nutrients during the first few days of breastfeeding.

Your breasts may become swollen and tender (engorgement) for a few days as your milk comes in. This settles as your body adjusts and produces the right amount. The more often your baby feeds and your breasts are emptied, the more milk you produce.

When your baby sucks at the breast, it triggers a hormone to cause milk to be squeezed into the ducts and reservoirs, which lie just under the areola surrounding your nipple. This process is called "the letdown".

Your body continues producing milk as your baby continues to suck regularly. When the baby sucks, nerves in the nipple pass a message on to the pituitary gland. This message alerts the gland to produce more hormones, which is responsible for milk production.

WHEN EXTRA HELP IS NEEDED

If your baby is sleepy or born early, your baby may need special help with feeding. You may need to feed more frequently or wake you baby up for feeds.

Help and advice is available from you local Hamilton Health Center 292-3095, Doctor, Health Visitor/Midwife and La Leche League 236-1120. You could also try phoning the Maternity Unit for advice: (239-2016)

THINGS WHICH AFFECT BREAST MILK

Medications: Remind your Doctor and Pharmacist that you are breastfeeding when you seek prescription medications.

Contraceptive Pill: A normal strength contraceptive pill can be passed into breast milk, however, a low dose pill is safe to take but it must be taken the same time everyday.

Smoking: It is a good idea to stop smoking or reduce smoking as substances can pass into your milk. Smoking can decrease your milk supply. Avoid second hand smoke.

Alcohol: Do not drink. Alcohol can pass into the breast milk. If you do consume alcohol, it should be right after breastfeeding your baby.

Breast Surgery: Women who have had breast surgery may find breastfeeding complicated. Discuss this with your doctor.

SORE NIPPLES

Nipples may feel tender during the first few days of breastfeeding. If soreness continues to get worse the baby might not be latched on correctly. If this is the case, ensure that you are comfortable and the baby is latched on and in the right position.

Seek assistance to help latch the baby correctly when in the hospital, during the visit with the midwife/Health Visitor, or with any other breastfeeding support.

- Apply breast milk to sore nipples after a feed can help them heal.
- Dry your nipples carefully in between feeds and expose them to the air for short periods.
- Alternate feeding positions.
- Rest sore nipple(s) for a few feeds, but express from the affected breast to prevent engorgement.
- Learning to latch your baby to the breast correctly is one of the most important things to remember with breastfeeding

BREASTFEEDING AFTER A CAESAREAN

A Caesarean birth does not directly affect the breastfeeding process, however discomfort, fatigue and medications may present more of a challenge when you begin breastfeeding. Nurse the baby as soon after delivery as possible and on demand.

Rooming in with your baby with staff assistance will assist with bonding and breastfeeding.

HOW CAN I INCREASE MY MILK SUPPLY?

- Feed the baby frequently –the more you put the baby to the breast the more milk will be produced
- If you put the baby to the breast less, or top-up with infant formula then your supply will decrease
- Check to ensure the baby is latched on to the breast correctly
- Rest and consume a healthy diet with plenty of fluids
- Express in between breastfeeds



COMMON CONCERNS

Breastfeeding is usually a pleasant experience for both mom and baby, occasionally difficulties arise which can be overcome.

IS MY BABY GETTING ENOUGH MILK?

The breast will produce enough milk. When the baby feeds frequently it increases your milk supply to satisfy your baby. This can also occur to accommodate growth spurts.

Once lactation is established, baby should be content after each feed, have 6 - 8 wet diapers a day and gain weight.

HOW LONG SHOULD EACH FEED LAST?

During the first few weeks, feeds can be enjoyed as long and as often as the baby demands. This is a time to get to know each other and it is best to respond to your baby's needs.

Your baby will be hungry every 2-4 hours, with the number of feeds varying from day to day.

After 4-6 weeks, many mothers and babies settle into a flexible feeding arrangement of 6-12 feeds every 24 hours. Night feeds may be needed for many months, as the baby becomes older they become more efficient at feeding and may get all they need in shorter periods, i.e. 5-10 minutes.