



Exclusive Breastfeeding / Feeding smart from the start

Babies need breast milk without any other food or fluid for the first 6 months of life. Thereafter introduce nutritious foods and continue to breastfeed for 2 years and beyond.

How do I know that my baby is getting enough breast milk?

- The baby is gaining weight: According to the growth chart (weight for age) the baby is growing well.
- The baby has about 6-8 wet nappies in 24 hours.
- The baby is happy and satisfied.

What if I cannot breastfeed my baby at the breast?

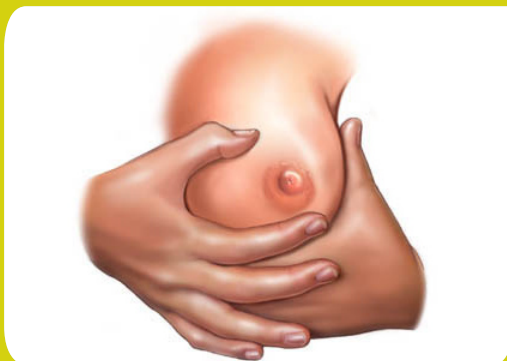
You can express your breast milk when:

- your baby goes to the neonatal unit
- you are discharged before your baby
- you are going back to work or study.

Important when expressing:

- Wash your hands.
- Use a clean container.
- Expressed milk must be kept cool.
- Cup feed the milk to your baby.

Speak to your healthcare provider for more information on hand milk expression.



Partners for successful breastfeeding

Healthcare workers can support the mother by:

- placing her baby skin-to-skin with her immediately after birth for at least an hour
- helping the mother to start breastfeeding within the first hour after birth
- keeping mother and baby together in the same room while in hospital (rooming in)
- not separating a mother and her baby unless there is a medical indication
- assisting the mother to position and attach her baby for successful breastfeeding.

Family and friends can support a mother by:

- respecting and supporting her decision to breastfeed
- respecting and supporting her decision to express her breast milk
- refraining from offering outdated advice
- assisting with household duties and caring for her other children.



Why must I breastfeed exclusively?

Breastfeeding will assist with your baby's brain development.

Breastfeeding will assist with your baby's teeth and jaw development.

Breastfeeding helps you to get to know your baby.

Breastfeeding is good for the mom because it:

- helps to decrease bleeding after birth
- decreases the chances of developing breast and ovarian cancer
- helps with weight control after pregnancy.

Why does my baby need breast milk?

The first milk produced by the breast is a sticky, yellow-white early milk (colostrum) and should be your baby's first food. It is normal for mothers to produce only a small amount of colostrum. This milk is rich in protective factors and vitamins and acts as your baby's first immunisation.

Other benefits of colostrum are that it:

- helps the baby to pass the first stool
- decreases the chances of developing jaundice

Breast milk contains **ALL** the necessary nutrients (vitamins and minerals) for good growth

No extra fluids (such as water, tea, formula milk, traditional medicines and home remedies) or foods are needed during the first 6 months of your baby's life.

Breast milk is your baby's natural food and helps protect your baby against malnutrition, chest infection and tummy bugs (such as diarrhoea).

Breast milk is available at all times (day and night) and is easily absorbed by your baby's tummy.

When do I start breastfeeding?

The best time to start breastfeeding is soon (in the first hour) after birth while your baby is lying skin-to-skin with you. This is the time when your baby's sucking reflex/action is at its strongest. Most newborns are ready to find the nipple and start breastfeeding within the first hour after birth.

Most babies will be placed skin to skin after birth which encourages mother-baby bonding and a good start to successful breastfeeding.

How do I breastfeed?

Most mothers can breastfeed effectively with positive support from healthcare providers, family and friends. Baby will usually feed at one breast until content and satisfied. Switch to the other breast at the next feed or if baby wants to continue feeding.

Positioning:

Holding your baby correctly makes breastfeeding easy:

- Mother must be comfortable
- Remove all barriers (extra blankets and clothing) between the mother and baby.
- Baby must be held close ("hugged") to the mother.
- Mother's arm must support the baby.
- The baby's ear, shoulder and hip should be in a straight line.
- Avoid pushing the baby's head towards the breast.



You can prevent painful nipples by attaching your baby to the breast correctly:

- The baby's mouth is wide open
- The lower lip is curled outwards.
- More areola (darkened area around the nipple) is visible above the baby's mouth than below it.
- The baby's chin must touch the mother's breast.

Suckling

Correct suckling help babies get enough milk.

You know your baby is suckling correctly when:

- the baby's cheeks are full and round, not drawn in
- deep suckling and swallowing sounds can sometimes be heard.

Why is it best to feed my baby whenever he or she wants to feed?

Feeding your baby often encourages a good milk supply and ensures a satisfied and happy baby.

- Feed your baby in the day and night.
- Feed whenever your baby wants to feed
- Feed your baby for as long as your baby wants to feed
- Allow the baby to end the feed.

Feeding cues

If your baby is hungry for a feed, he or she will:

- search for the mother's breast (rooting)
- make suckling sounds
- turn the head from side to side
- put the hands or fingers in the mouth
- moan or cry.