

Off to the best start

Important information about feeding your baby

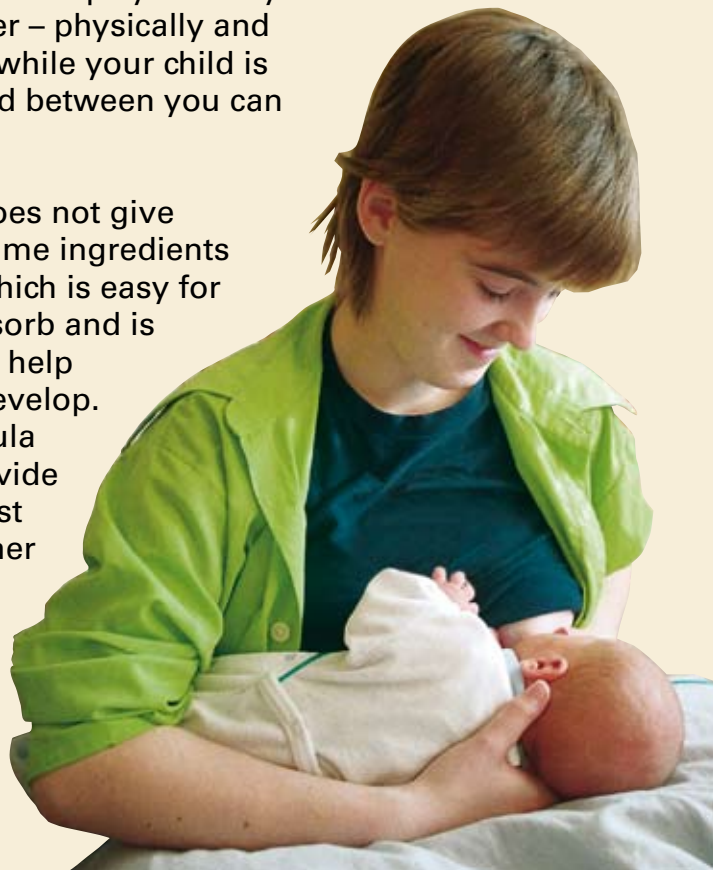


Breastfeeding – the best start for your baby

Breastfeeding gives your baby all the nutrients he needs for the first six months of life. It helps to protect him from infection and other diseases. And it reduces your chances of getting some illnesses later in life.

Breastfeeding also helps you and your baby to get closer – physically and emotionally. So while your child is feeding, the bond between you can grow stronger.

Bottle feeding does not give your baby the same ingredients as breastmilk, which is easy for your baby to absorb and is a perfect food to help him grow and develop. And infant formula milk doesn't provide protection against infection and other diseases.



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What does breastfeeding help protect against?



Women who breastfeed get their figures back faster

Breast cancer

Weak bones later in life

Ovarian cancer

Ear infections

Asthma

Eczema

Chest infections

Obesity

Gastro-intestinal infections

Childhood diabetes

Urine infections

After your baby is born

Holding your baby against your skin straight after birth will calm your baby. It will also steady his breathing and keep him warm.

This is a great time to start your first breastfeed, because your baby will be alert and

want to feed within a couple of hours of birth. Your midwife can help you with this.

Your baby will be happier if you keep him near you and feed him whenever he is hungry. This will remind your body to produce plenty of milk.



How to breastfeed

What position should you use?

There are lots of different positions for breastfeeding. You just need to check the following:

Are your baby's head and body in a straight line?

If not, your baby might not be able to swallow easily.

Are you holding your baby close to you?

Try to support his back, shoulders and neck. He should be able to tilt his head back easily. And he shouldn't have to reach out to feed.



Is your baby's nose opposite your nipple?

Your baby needs to get a big mouthful of breast from underneath the nipple. Placing your baby with his nose level with your nipple will allow him to reach up and attach to the breast well.



Are you comfortable?

It's OK to change your position slightly once your baby is attached to your breast.



How should you attach your baby to your breast?

- Hold your baby close to you with his nose level with the nipple.
- Wait until your baby opens his mouth really wide with the tongue down. You can encourage him to do this by gently stroking his top lip.
- Quickly bring your baby even closer to your breast.
- Your baby will tilt his head back and come to your breast chin first. He should take a large mouthful of breast. Your nipple should go towards the roof of his mouth.



Signs that your baby is feeding well

- Your baby has a large mouthful of breast.
- Your baby's chin is touching your breast.
- It doesn't hurt you to feed (after the first few sucks).
- If you can see the dark skin around your nipple, you should see more dark skin above your baby's top lip than below his bottom lip.
- Your baby's cheeks stay rounded during sucking.
- Your baby rhythmically takes long sucks and swallows. It is normal for him to pause sometimes.
- Your baby finishes the feed and comes off the breast on his own.



How do you know that your baby is getting enough milk?

- Your baby will appear content and satisfied after most feeds.
- He should be healthy and gaining weight after the first two weeks.
- Your breasts and nipples should not be sore.
- After the first few days, your baby should have at least six wet nappies a day.
- He should also pass at least two yellow stools every day.



Tips for successful breastfeeding

Make sure your baby is properly attached to your breast (see page 9)

- You will have a good supply of milk and your baby will get a good feed.
- It will help stop your breasts getting sore.



Try not to give your baby other food or drink

- The more you breastfeed your baby the more milk you will produce. Giving other food or drink will reduce your milk supply.
- You might increase the chance of your baby getting ill.



Try not to give your baby a dummy

- Babies who have a dummy sometimes find it difficult to remember how to attach to the breast.
- Your baby will be less likely to feed when he needs to.

Don't be scared to ask for help

- It can take a while before you feel confident. You can ask your midwife or health visitor to help you with breastfeeding.

If you stop breastfeeding, it can be difficult to re-start.

For information on healthy eating while breastfeeding see www.eatwell.gov.uk



Expressing milk

What does 'expressing milk' mean?

- Expressing milk means squeezing milk out of your breast.
- You can express milk by hand or with a hand pump or an electric pump.
- If you use a pump, try it before you buy, if possible. Different pumps suit different women. Always make sure a pump is clean and sterile before you use it.



Why express milk?

- If you are away from your baby or returning to work you may wish to express milk so that somebody else can feed your baby.

Why express by hand?

- If your breasts feel uncomfortably full.
- If your baby isn't sucking well and you want to give him breastmilk.
- If you don't want to buy or use a pump to express milk.

How to express milk by hand

1. Cup your breast and feel back from the end of the nipple to where the texture of your breast feels different.
2. Using your thumb and index finger, gently squeeze this area – this shouldn't hurt.
3. Release the pressure and then repeat again and again, building up a rhythm. Avoid sliding your fingers over the skin. Milk should start to flow.
4. When the flow slows down, express from the other breast. Keep changing breasts until the milk stops or drips very slowly.
5. If the milk doesn't flow, try moving your fingers slightly towards the nipple or further away. Or try a gentle breast massage.



Storing milk

Remember to use a sterilised container to put the milk in.

You can store milk in the fridge at a temperature of 2°C–4°C for up to 24 hours.

Breastmilk can be stored for one week in the ice compartment of a fridge or for up to six months in a freezer.

If you are freezing breastmilk because your baby is premature or ill, ask the staff caring for the baby for advice.

Expressing milk for a baby who is premature or ill

It is important to start expressing your milk as soon as possible after your baby is born.

In order to ensure that you produce plenty of milk, you will need to express at least six to eight times in 24 hours, including during the night.

Ask the hospital staff about holding your baby in skin-to-skin contact. This can help with bonding and keeping up your milk supply.



Where to find help

Don't be afraid to ask for support or advice to make breastfeeding work for you and your baby.

Speak to your midwife or health visitor, or contact one of the voluntary organisation breastfeeding helplines below.

National Childbirth Trust

0870 444 8708
www.nct.org.uk

The Breastfeeding Network

0870 900 8787
www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

La Leche League

0845 120 2918
www.laleche.org.uk

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers

0870 401 7711
www.abm.me.uk

For online information about breastfeeding, visit www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk

UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative

UNICEF is the world's leading children's charity.

The Baby Friendly Initiative provides training and assessment for hospitals and community health services to enable them to give breastfeeding mothers the help and support they need to breastfeed successfully. Visit www.babyfriendly.org.uk

Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed your baby. If you decide not to breastfeed or to stop breastfeeding, it is possible to restart but it will be difficult. Giving formula milk to a breastfed baby will reduce your breastmilk supply.

You do not need to eat any special foods while breastfeeding, but it is a good idea for you, just like everyone else, to eat a healthy diet.