

## **Breastfeeding: Answers to Your Questions**

### ***I don't always eat right. Should I breastfeed?***

There's no special diet for breastfeeding mothers. Moms will make enough milk even if they don't always eat healthy. Try eating a variety of foods including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and meats or meat substitutes. Caffeine — found in colas, coffee, teas, energy drinks and chocolate — can cause your baby to be fussy. It's a good idea to limit caffeine beverages to 1 to 2 cups a day or use decaffeinated beverages. Drink water, milk or 100% juice when you are thirsty.

### ***What if I smoke?***

If you smoke, the best thing for you, your baby and your family is to try your hardest to quit. If you can't quit, breastfeeding is still best for you and your baby because the benefits of breastfeeding outweigh the risks of smoking.

Breastfeed before you smoke to limit the amount of nicotine that enters your milk, and try to limit the number of cigarettes smoked to fewer than 10 a day. Because second-hand smoke can increase the risk for SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), no one should smoke inside your home or around your baby.

### ***What if I get sick or need medicine?***

Mother's milk is made to fight the diseases that their babies are exposed to — continue breastfeeding if you are sick. Just make sure that you wash your hands with soap and water before feeding your baby. Also, try not to cough or sneeze in the baby's face while breastfeeding, or any other time you and your baby are close.

Most medicines are safe for breastfeeding mothers and babies if taken as directed. Check with your doctor or breastfeeding specialist before taking any medicines, including the ones you buy without a prescription. Tellyour doctor that you are breastfeeding so that a safe medicine can be recommended.

If you have any questions about smoking, drinking alcohol, or taking medications while breastfeeding, please call your breastfeeding (lactation) specialist.

### ***Why Should I Breastfeed?***

#### **Which benefits are the most important to you?**

##### ***Breastmilk...***

- Contains more than 200 nutrients.
- Is always ready and is never too hot or too cold.
- Protects your baby from illness and makes vaccines work better.

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**Breastfed babies are healthier.**

***Breastfed babies have...***

- Fewer ear infections, asthma and pneumonia.
- Less tummy troubles (gas, constipation and diarrhea).
- Better brain development and do better on IQ tests.
- Less risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Less risk of diabetes and obesity in childhood and as an adult.

**Mothers who breastfeed are healthier.**

***Mothers who breastfeed have...***

- Less bleeding after childbirth and lose weight quicker.
- Less risk of breast, ovarian and uterine cancer
- Less risk of diabetes and heart disease.
- Stronger bones.

**Breastfeeding saves time and money!**

***Parents who breastfeed...***

- Save more than \$1,000 the first year alone by not having to buy formula and bottles.
- Miss less work caring for sick children.
- Have less health care costs for baby.

**Breastfeeding is good for your family....**

- because it is the healthiest, safest and simplest way to feed your baby.
- because it makes life easier for the whole family.
- because it saves your money.

***Breastfeeding is a special gift only you can give your baby.***

## Breastfeeding in the First Weeks

### Learning about breastfeeding

Talk to other women who have breastfed. Take a breastfeeding class, read books or pamphlets.

### Beginning to breastfeed

- Breastfeed as soon as possible after birth.
- Breastfeed every 1½ to 3 hours, or 8 to 12 times in 24 hours.
- Before going home, ask a nurse to watch an entire feeding to make sure your baby is getting breastmilk.

### Breastfeed your baby often

Your baby needs your first milk (colostrum) before your milk becomes abundant. Breastfeed often so your body knows to make enough milk. Your breasts do not need to “rest” or “fill up” between feedings. You are always making milk!

### Breastfeed when your baby first shows signs of hunger

Babies let you know they are hungry by:

- Sucking on his or her hands; lip smacking.
- Rooting — turning his head sideways with mouth open.
- Fussing.

If your baby is crying, a late sign of hunger, calm him before trying to breastfeed.

Having a new baby is a big change in your life whether you breastfeed or not. Breastfeeding and baby care become easier with practice and experience.

## Three Steps to a Good Latch

- **Step 1:** Turn your baby on his side with his face, tummy and knees toward you. Pull baby's bottom into your body with your forearm. Your nipple should be pointed at baby's nose.
- **Step 2:** If you support your breast with your hand, make sure you place your thumb and fingers back away from the nipple. Tickle your baby's nose with your nipple. As your baby opens his mouth wide, let his head tilt back. Now your nipple is pointed at the roof of baby's mouth. Bring baby to the breast chin-first.

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- **Step 3:** Baby's chin should be pressed into your breast. Baby's nose will be clear of the breast or will touch slightly. Make sure baby has a good, deep latch and a mouthful of breast. Let your baby end the feeding. Your baby will let go or fall asleep when he is no longer hungry. He will look very content. If needed, break suction before you take baby off your breast by gently sliding your finger between your baby's gums and into his mouth.

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Avoid formula in the first 4 to 6 weeks. Giving your baby formula tells your body not to make milk and will cause your milk supply to decrease. Artificial nipples, if used in the early weeks, can confuse your baby and can also decrease your milk supply.

Breastfed babies don't need water, sugar water or formula.

## **Making Enough Milk for Your Baby**

### **Colostrum**

Colostrum, the first milk, is the only food your baby needs. Colostrum protects your baby from illness, helps baby to start bowel movements and satisfies your baby's hunger and thirst. Two to five days after birth, mothers notice that they have more milk. Over time, your breasts will make more milk and less colostrum.

### **Making milk is easy when you know how and when to breastfeed**

The more your baby breastfeeds and removes milk from the breast, the more breastmilk you will make. How much milk you make depends on these things:

- How well your baby is removing milk,
- How often your baby is breastfeeding, and
- How long your baby breastfeeds at each feeding.

Babies enjoy breastfeeding. Every baby is different. Some feed a short time and need coaxing to continue. Some babies cluster feed: they breastfeed several times in two to three hours and then sleep deeply for several hours. Some very sleepy babies don't wake up to eat. In the early weeks, you might have to wake up a sleepy baby to feed him if it has been more than three hours since the last feeding. Newborns are hungry often because their stomachs are small.

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**Newborns need to breastfeed often, every 1½ to 3 hours, or 8 to 12 times in 24 hours.**

Let your baby finish feeding on the first breast, then offer the second. Your baby will let you know when he is full by coming off the breast or falling asleep. As babies continue to grow, they get more milk at each feeding and are able to breastfeed faster.

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**How do I know if my baby is getting enough breastmilk?**

- Watch for these signs in the first few weeks.
- My baby is active and alert.
- My baby is breastfeeding 8 to 12 times each 24 hours.
- I hear or see my baby swallow when she breastfeeds.
- My baby begins to gain weight after day 5, and is back to her birth weight by 10 days of age.
- After the first week, my baby gains 4-8 ounces each week.
- My baby has three or more stools daily after day one, increasing to four or more stools by day five. A stool is a stain the size of your baby's fist, or at least one teaspoon of solid material.
- My baby's stool changes from black to yellow by day five.
- My baby has clear or pale yellow urine and 6 or more soaking wet diapers daily by day five.
- My breasts feel full before feeding and soft after feeding.
- Breastfeeding my baby is comfortable.

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### Growth spurts

Suddenly your baby is eating all the time! This is called a growth spurt. Breastfeeding more often is your baby's way of building your milk supply to meet his increasing needs. You may notice growth spurts at the following times, but growth spurts can occur any time!

- 3 weeks old
- 6 weeks old
- 3 months old
- 6 months old

Your body will adjust to your baby's needs by making more milk when you breastfeed more often.

### Increasing your milk supply

- Breastfeeding more often than usual will increase your milk supply.
- Add two or more extra feedings a day for three to four days.
- Massaging your breasts before and during feedings or pumping will also help.
- If you are away from your baby, pumping more often will help to increase your milk supply.

### Storing and Thawing Expressed Breastmilk

The USDA Infant Nutrition and Feeding Guide recommends the following for safe storage and warming of breastmilk. Expressed breastmilk is a perishable food which must be stored right for safe consumption. The following guidelines are recommended to prevent contamination of breastmilk:

#### Storing Breast Milk

- Store your breastmilk in clean glass bottles, hard plastic bottles or disposable plastic nursing bags tightly capped or sealed after filling.
- Do not use ordinary plastic bags or infant formula bottle bags since they may crack and leak.
- Put just 2 to 4 ounces in each container or the amount you think your baby will take at a feeding.
- Some 1 ounce portions can be frozen for times when your baby may want extra milk.
- When filling a bottle, leave room (about 1 inch) at the top because breastmilk expands when it freezes.
- Never add fresh breastmilk to already frozen breastmilk.

### Refrigerator and Freezer Storage

- Put the date and your baby's name on the container so caregivers use the oldest milk first.
- You can store breastmilk in the refrigerator (temperature of 39° F or less) for 2 days. It is best to store it in the back (coldest) part of the refrigerator.
- Freeze your breastmilk if you won't use it within 48 hours.
- Frozen breastmilk should be stored in the back of the freezer where the temperature is at 0° F. It can be stored for 3-6 months.
- If traveling with bottles of expressed breastmilk, store them in a cooler with ice or an ice pack.

### Thawing or Warming

- Once frozen breastmilk is thawed, it should be refrigerated and used within 24 hours and should not be refrozen.
- Milk should be thawed quickly. To thaw and warm a container of frozen breastmilk:
  - Hold the bottle under running lukewarm water.
  - Shake the bottle gently to mix (breastmilk separates into a fatty layer and a watery layer when it is stored).
- Avoid too much heat or shaking because heat will damage the protective parts in the milk, and very hard shaking will cause the milk fat to separate out.
- Test the temperature before feeding your baby to make sure that it isn't too hot or too cold (test by squirting a couple of drops onto the back of your hand).
- Thaw or warm only as much breastmilk as you think will be needed for a feeding. Thawed breastmilk must be used within 24 hours. If not used by then, it needs to be thrown away.
- Do not refreeze breastmilk that has been thawed.
- Do not thaw or heat breastmilk in a microwave oven. The milk in the bottle may become very hot when heated in a microwave even though the bottle feels cool. Babies have been burned while being fed liquids warmed in a microwave oven.
- Heating the milk too hot destroys the immunities in the milk.

**These guidelines should not be used for formula.**

***The information above comes from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health and the WIC Program.***