

## Breast Feeding

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### Introduction

Breast-feeding is special in many ways for both you and your baby. Each mother's breast milk is made especially for her own newborn. One important difference between breast milk and bottle milk is the taste. Breast milk is much sweeter and much fresher than formulas. The sugar contained in your breast milk is lactose, which is essential in providing proper brain growth and also aids in the growth of needed intestinal bacteria.

Two types of milk are present within your breasts: foremilk and hindmilk. Foremilk is light, thin milk and can be obtained through nipple suckling. Hindmilk (sometimes called growth milk) is thicker, heavier milk containing essential fats proteins. Hindmilk is obtained when your baby sucks correctly on your breast by encompassing the nipple and the areola. Some women feel a tingling sensation or type of 'letting-down' from their breast when the hindmilk is released, others feel nothing at all. The milk-ejection reflex (MER), as it is called may occur several times throughout a single feeding. For first time breast-feeders this reflex may not occur until the second or third week of breast-feeding.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies receive breast milk during the entire first year. There are many advantages to breast milk (see below).

### Special Mix

Another significant difference between breast milk and bottle milk is that a large percentage, in fact, almost all of the vitamins, minerals, and iron in your breast milk is used by your baby, whereas with bottle milk as little as 5 - 10% of all the vitamins, minerals, and iron are used by your baby. Breast milk also continues to change as your baby grows to meet the changing needs of your infant, no formula is capable of such a change. Breast milk contains protecting agents to help ensure your baby's health. Among these are white blood cells and immunoglobulins. Both white blood cells and immunoglobulins are disease and infection fighting agents.

### Promotes Bonding

Breast-feeding can begin immediately following the delivery of your baby. During this time you and your newborn can become acquainted with each other by merely laying together skin to skin. Don't be alarmed if your baby doesn't suckle from your breast right away, remember you and your newborn have just been through a traumatic experience and the two of you need time to relax and enjoy each other. When you're ready you may want stimulate your baby's lips with your nipple. The rooting reflex, as it is called, usually causes your baby to want to suck. This first interaction between you and your baby helps to bond the two of you.

Sucking is a very comforting mechanism for you and your newborn, plus your baby begins to recognize the warmth and closeness of your body next to his/hers.

## Advantages of Breast Feeding

Whether or not you feel uncomfortable by the idea of breast-feeding, there are many things to consider before you choose how you will feed your baby.

The following are some of the advantages of breast feeding your baby:

- Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for your baby. It provides your baby with important antibodies that protects him/her from infections and getting sick.
- Breast feeding your baby is free! You won't have to worry about buying formula and making sure it is ready when your baby is ready to eat! Traveling with our baby will also be easier because you won't have to worry about carrying around bottles and formula.
- While your body is making breast milk, it burns about 500 calories per day! This means you may be able to lose your pregnancy weight faster than a woman not breast-feeding.
- Breast-feeding will make your diet a healthy and well-balanced one. Remember, whatever you eat so does your baby. You want to make sure that you maintain a combination of fruits, vegetables, protein, and carbohydrates while breast-feeding.

## Breast Feeding, As Easy As 1, 2, 3...

**STEP 1:** Cup your breast with your palm on the underside and thumb on top. Gently squeeze your breast to allow a few drops of milk to present on the areolar area of your breast (this is the dark area surrounding your nipple). While cupping your breast, allow your nipple to slightly graze the lips of your baby. The rooting reflex will take place which causes your baby's mouth to open wide enough to allow you to place your nipple in the center of his/her mouth.

**STEP 2:** The next step is rather tricky. When your baby's mouth is open wide, you'll need to quickly pull your baby in to your body using your arm. As rough as this may sound, it is the proper technique. Your baby's mouth opens wide and then shuts quickly, so you need to move rapidly in order to get your nipple in to the correct place. Always pull your baby back toward you with your arm, this will keep you in a comfortable position for the remainder of the feeding. This method is called the RAM method by most pediatricians, (rapid arm movement).

**STEP 3:** Make sure your baby is latched on correctly. Baby should breast feed from your areolas, not your nipples. After a couple breast feedings from your nipple only, you will experience sore nipples and your baby will receive less milk. The areolas, or dark areas surrounding your nipples, contain the milk supply, thus the importance of waiting for your baby's mouth to open wide to ensure a proper latch-on. If necessary, you may need to use your index finger to lower your baby's chin opening the mouth wide. You may also need to use your finger to make sure your baby's lips are on the outside. If you don't get it the first, or second, or even third time, don't be frustrated, it takes practice and discipline on the parts of you and your baby.

It is permissible to pull your baby close enough to slightly buckle his/her nose. Many baby 's have no problems breathing in this manner, but if your baby should have difficulty breathing, pull his/her bottom in closer to your body and this will elevate any breathing problems.

During the first couple weeks of your breast-feeding, you will need to support your breast so that the weight is not directed onto your baby. As your baby grows and becomes stronger, you will not need to do this step.

## Breast Feeding Holds

As long as your breast-feeding is being done correctly, you shouldn't experience any problems, such as: sore nipples, insufficient milk supply, or even frustration. There are two holds commonly used during breast-feeding the cradle hold and the clutch hold.

### **Cradle Hold:**

Before you begin breast-feeding make sure that you are in a comfortable position, so that it is easy for you to relax. Undress your infant prior to breast-feeding to allow skin-to-skin contact between you and your baby. This method can also aid in keeping babies who seem too tired to feed a little more awake throughout the process. Place your baby on his/her side facing you. Your baby 's head should rest in the bend of your elbow, so that his/her face is directed toward your breast. Your forearm should support your baby 's back, and your hand should be holding your baby 's bottom. Keep your baby 's body in line and allow your tummies to meet. In order to get your baby at proper breast level, you may want to place a pillow on your lap or use a footstool to raise your lap. Place your baby 's arms into his/her body to keep them from interfering during the feeding.

### **Clutch Hold (or football hold):**

If your baby has problems latching on to your nipple, is fidgety during feedings, or is very small, possibly premature this hold can solve your problems. Sitting in either your bed or an armchair, place a pillow along the side of your body you plan to breast-feed from and another pillow on your lap. Place your infant along the same side with his/her feet pointing towards your back. Using the hand that is on the side you plan to breast feed from, allow your baby 's neck to rest in that palm. Your baby 's knees should be facing upward. Bring your elbow in to your baby so as to cradle him/her from the side.

### **Lying-down hold:**

This hold is great for night feedings or early morning feedings. Lie on your side and place your baby along side of you tummy to tummy. Tuck your little ones hands in between the two of you to minimize interruptions from flailing arms. Place the arm you are lying on underneath your head, and place your other arm snugly around your baby supporting your baby 's head and neck with your hand. Place pillows behind your back to make yourself more comfortable. Place pillows behind your baby to prop him/her up to breast level.

## Breast Feeding and Drugs

Red flags should go up before you take any kind of medication without first consulting your physician! While your breast-feeding there is always a possibility that what you take your baby is also taking. Ask yourself these important questions before taking any medication:



1. Do I really need this medication?
2. Can my baby be harmed in any way by me taking this medication?
3. Will my milk production be affected by me taking this medication?
4. Is there an alternative for me to try instead of taking this medication?
5. Can I take the medication at different times to lessen the amount of the medication that comes in contact with my baby?

Under **NO** circumstances should you take any of the following drugs:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• amphetamines</li><li>• antimetabolite drugs (anticancer drugs)</li><li>• cocaine</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• cyclosporine</li><li>• heroin</li><li>• marijuana</li><li>• methotrexate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mysoline</li><li>• nicotine</li><li>• Parlodel</li><li>• PCP</li></ul>
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- Any antidepressant or tranquilizer should be monitored by a physician.
- Alcohol should not be consumed during breast-feeding.

## Eating Healthy for Two while Breast Feeding

Just as your physician stressed the importance of eating for two during your pregnancy, your physician will also now stress the importance of eating for two during breast-feeding. Some foods you eat can irritate your baby during breast-feeding. Certain foods make their way into breast milk through distinctive tastes in as little as two hours. Watch your baby during breast feedings, if their behavior becomes fussy this might mean that something you ate recently is upsetting your baby. Watch foods such as: dairy products, caffeine, wheat and corn, peanuts, anything spicy, broccoli, onions, green peppers, cabbage. Always remember, what you eat or don't eat, is what your baby is eating or not eating. Try eating a variety of different foods to ensure you and your baby are getting essential vitamins and minerals.

- Protein is a must, at least 60-75 grams daily.
- Vitamin C helps in tissue repair and other healing processes try for two servings daily. Also, your baby for strong teeth and bones uses Vitamin C.
- Calcium is necessary to ensure your baby grows healthy and strong. Calcium aids in the development of bones, teeth, muscles, the heart, and nerves. Aim for at least four servings of Calcium daily.
- Vitamins A & E helps your baby develop healthy skin, eyes, and bones. Indulge in three servings daily of yellow fruits & green leafy vegetables to get Vitamin A & E.
- Vitamin B, zinc, magnesium, and selenium can be found in whole wheat breads, pasta, cereals, beans, & rice. Shoot for five servings daily.
- Iron is very important. Iron helps with blood supply.
- Fluids are still very important. Extra fluids help to reduce constipation, rid your body of toxins, help reduce urinary tract infections, and also help to keep your skin hydrated. Eight glasses of fluids should be consumed daily.

## Common Breast Feeding Questions

### ***Q. Does my milk come in just following delivery of my baby?***

Usually, your milk comes in between the second and fifth day following your delivery. For the first couple of days your baby receives a type of milk known as colostrum. Colostrum is kind of premilk rich in protein, minerals, vitamins, and immune factors. The second type of milk you produce is called transitional milk, and after about two weeks your breasts produce mature milk.

### ***Q. My nipples are sore, am I doing something wrong?***

If your nipples are sore, you need to check your latch on technique and the position of your baby during breast-feeding. See holding positions.

### ***Q. How much should my baby be eating, and how often do I need to feed him/her?***

Each baby is different. Some babies eat like there 's no tomorrow while others take their time and even nap throughout their meal. Get to know your baby during his/her feeding. Take time to watch him/her very closely, and soon you 'll recognize how much and how long your baby needs to feed. Babies less than six weeks old usually want to feed about every two hours.

During this time, allow your baby to feed as long and as much as he or she wishes. As long as your baby is feeding enough to wet four to six diapers a day, there is no need for you to worry.

### ***Q. What should I wear to breast feed my baby?***

Clothing is available that is specially designed for breast-feeding. These clothes can be purchased at any store carrying maternity clothing. One must for breast-feeding mothers is a bra made specifically for breast-feeding. Other clothing that may be helpful to breast feeding mothers is breast pads, or breast-feeding tops.

**Bras:** Bras should be purchased prior to birth and they should be one-cup size larger than what you have been wearing during your pregnancy. Once your mature milk sets in you should have at least three comfortable breast feeding bras. Make sure your bra is snug enough to allow for proper support, but loose enough to allow your breast to fill before feedings. Breast can incur infections if your bra is too tight. Make sure your bra snaps and un-snaps easily with one hand, that way you don't have to put your baby down to gain access to your breast. Your bra should be made of cotton to allow air to reach your nipple.

Breast Pads: Breast pads are worn to absorb milk that may leak from your breast. You can make your own breast pads with any cotton material; just remember to remove breast pads after leaking occurs.

***Q. What should I do if I don't get sufficient milk?***

Consult your attending Doctors. The most effective Homoeopathic medicines are **Galega, Alfalfa, Lactuca Virosa** etc.

#### References

1> Murphy's Materia Media

2> Various sources from Internet