

Breast Feeding

Breast feeding is one of the most important things you can do for your baby. Here are a few guidelines and suggestions to help you.

Getting Started:

- Wash your hands for at least 15 seconds before starting.
- Put the phone on silence or arrange for someone else to answer it.
- Find a comfortable position in a chair or bed.
- Gently massage your breast in a circular motion for about 30 seconds before letting the baby begin to nurse. This will help the milk flow easier.
- If your nipples do not stand out, ask your doctor or lactation consultant to assess them.

What is the right position for breast feeding?

- There are three basic positions: cradle, side-lying and football hold. Use different positions for each feeding so that you change where the baby puts pressure on your nipples. This will help all the milk ducts in your breast to empty.
- Be sure you and your baby are comfortable and well-supported. Use pillows or a nursing pillow to support the baby's weight.
- Position your baby so his nose is at the level of your nipple. Try to keep your baby's head and chest facing the same direction, so that your baby's head is not turned to the side.
- Support your breast with a cupped hand by using four fingers under your breast and the thumb on top of your breast. This helps good milk flow and won't block the milk ducts in your breast.
- Help your baby to open his mouth by rubbing your nipple over his lips.
- When your baby opens his mouth wide, quickly bring your baby to your breast. He should get about 1/2 to 1 inch of the areola (brown area of your breast) in his mouth.
- Pulling the baby's chin down or pushing the nipple into the baby's mouth is not effective.
- Start with the opposite breast each feeding.
- Be sure to break the suction as you remove your baby from your breast. Gently insert your finger into the corner of your baby's mouth and gently push between your baby's jaw and your breast. You will feel the suction on your breast stop.

How can I tell if my baby is sucking the right way?

Babies are sucking correctly when you:

- See your baby's lips curled outward from your breast.
- Can hear your baby swallowing. Swallowing sounds like a "ka ka" and should be heard every 1-2 sucks.
- Do not hear any clicking or smacking sounds.
- Do not see dimpling or drawing in of the cheeks.
- Nipple soreness when you first start is normal. Nipple soreness or nipple pain during feeding should not occur.

How often do breast fed babies need to eat?

- Breast feed your baby as soon as it is possible. Some babies are ready to nurse as soon as they are born.
- Newborn babies need to eat at least every 2 to 3 hours or at least 8 times in 24 hours.
- Read your baby's feeding cues. This is when he is rooting or bringing his hands to his mouth. When you see this then offer the breast. Crying is a late feeding cue.
- When your baby nurses, he should have long drawn out sucks and you should be able to hear him suck. Most babies will nurse 10-20 minutes. If nursing goes longer than 30 minutes, he might not be nursing effectively.
- Pacifiers and bottles should be used with caution during the first month of breast feeding.

How do I know that my baby is getting enough to eat?

Your baby will give you several clues that he is eating well. You will notice your baby:

- Swallows during feedings.
- Has 6 or more wet diapers and several stools every day.
- Is content (quiet or sleeping) between feedings.
- Gains about 4 to 7 ounces every week.

Babies go through growth spurts. During these times, your baby will want to nurse more often for about 2 or 3 days. It is your baby's way of telling you that he needs your body to make more milk. These growth spurts are usually at the following times, but may occur at other times:

- First few days at home
- 10 to 14 days of age
- 4 to 6 weeks of age
- 3 months of age
- 6 months of age

How do I take care of my breasts?

- Keep your breasts clean and dry, and bathe daily.
- Avoid using soaps, sprays, or creams on your nipples (and areola) unless recommended by your doctor or nurse.
- After your baby nurses, apply some breast milk to your nipples and let them dry.

There are some things **you** will notice about your infant's feeding:

- When your milk first comes in, your breasts will become swollen as your body makes milk. After about one week, this swelling goes down. (This is not a sign of decreased milk supply.)
- Your breasts will be fuller before feedings, and softer when your baby is finished.
- You may notice a "let down" sensation. This is a warm, tingling feeling when the baby starts to nurse. (It also is normal to not feel this).

What should I do to take care of myself?

- Eat a well balanced diet with a variety of foods. Keep your weight loss to about 2 to 4 pounds per month after the first month. (See "**Breast Feeding – Diet for Mom**" CARE CARD.)
- Continue your prenatal vitamins.
- Drink enough liquids so that you are not thirsty. Try to limit the amount of caffeine or alcohol that you drink.
- DO NOT SMOKE or let anyone else smoke around you or your baby.
- Get plenty of rest – sleep when the baby sleeps.
- Let your friends and family help with the cooking and house work.

Where do I go if I need help?

There are many resources for help with breast-feeding:

- Lactation Management Program Help Line: (816) 346-1309
- WIC support group
- LeLeche League
- Pediatrician office lactation consultant or breast feeding educator
- Delivery hospital breast feeding support group or lactation clinic

Call your baby's doctor immediately if your baby is 3 weeks of age or younger and:

- He has less than 4 stools per day.
- He has less than 6 wet diapers per day.
- His skin turns yellow (jaundice).