



YOUR GO-TO **Breastfeeding Guide**

Discover the most important things you need to know about breastfeeding basics, the importance of nutrition, best breastfeeding positions, how to keep track of your baby's intake and more with our guide!

Breastfeeding Basics



Boost your confidence

Breastfeeding techniques take time, patience, and practice. There are several great ways to kick off the breastfeeding process before your baby arrives. While you are pregnant, tell your health care team about your plans to breastfeed. They can point you in the direction of a lactation consultant or specialist (your hospital may have one on staff), a support group or breastfeeding classes. Having experienced guidance you can trust will help boost your confidence in your choice to provide breastmilk to your baby.

Get advice

After your baby has arrived, a lactation specialist or nurse will offer encouragement and support. Your labor nurse will get you off to a good start by teaching you how to position your baby and help guide your baby on how to latch. Advice from other breastfeeding moms can also be helpful.

Skin-to-skin contact

Experts recommend that you hold your baby skin-to-skin right after the birth if you are able. When you and your baby are together in skin-to-skin for the first few hours after birth your baby will feel calm and connected to you, and you to her. This time helps to develop your baby's suckling instinct, and you may find she latches and breastfeeds with minimal help. Babies welcome comfortable positioning and it may take time for your baby to get the hang of latching. Be patient and you will find there are ways for you and your baby to make breastfeeding work uniquely for you.

Know the signs

One key element to successful breastfeeding is to recognize your baby's signs that she is ready to eat! For example, your baby may display "rooting", turning her head and looking for the breast. When you see this sign, it's time to start nursing. Follow your baby's lead!

Hold off on the pacifier

While getting settled into the routine of breastfeeding, it's important to avoid "nipple confusion" — meaning it's best to avoid offering your baby bottles and pacifiers until three or four weeks after birth. The sucking reflex needed for a bottle or a pacifier is very different from sucking from the breast. This can lead to difficulties in latching and complicate the breastfeeding process.

How much breastmilk?

Though every baby is different, it's helpful to know that 1-month old to 6-month-old babies who are exclusively breastfed will typically take in between **19- 30 oz of breastmilk a day.**

If your baby is feeding 8 times a day, she'll typically get around 3 oz per feeding.

30 oz

FAQs

Breastfeeding is a natural process and takes time and practice. Your body will have baby's first milk, colostrum, at the ready after birth. As your baby latches and suckles, your body will respond by making more colostrum, and eventually, milk. Usually milk comes in around Day 3 or 4 after birth. **Your baby may take some time to get used to latching, so keep your patience at the ready and ask your nurses for tips.**

How does breastfeeding benefit my baby?

Your breastmilk has over 300 ingredients uniquely mixed for your baby. In fact, your body adjusts the ingredients in milk to respond to your baby's daily needs. One example of this is melatonin, a hormone which regulates sleep. Melatonin varies its concentration throughout a 24-hour cycle, playing a role in your baby's sleep cycle. Breastmilk also protects your baby from ear infections, sudden unexpected infant death, diarrhea, respiratory illnesses and allergies.

How does breastfeeding benefit me?

The immediate health benefits of breastfeeding include less postpartum bleeding and infection. Women who breastfeed experience more rapid weight loss and experience less depression, stress and anxiety. Long-term benefits include a decreased risk of certain cancers, diabetes and high blood pressure.

How often do I need to nurse my baby?

The stomach of a newborn is small and breastmilk is digested quickly. In the first weeks, newborns will eat between 8 and 12 times in a 24-hour period. Each session can last 10–40 minutes. This frequency stimulates your body to keep up your milk supply. Once your baby is 2–3 months old, he tends to space out feedings a bit more, but 8–10 times a day is still normal.

How do I know my baby is hungry?

When hungry, babies will suck on their hands, flex their fingers, nuzzle against your breast, and cry as a late sign of hunger. When they're full, they'll relax their arms and legs, and close their eyes.

When can I begin breastfeeding my baby?

Most newborns are ready to breastfeed an hour after they're born. Engage in "skin-to-skin" care after your baby is born to trigger your little one's latching reflex.

What if your baby is preterm?

It is especially important that preterm babies are fed breastmilk. In fact, physicians will often prescribe breastmilk as a critical treatment for preterm infants. If a mother cannot provide breastmilk, pasteurized donor human milk is used.



Human milk is superior in its ability to strengthen the baby's **immune system**, has growth hormones that help the baby's **gut health** and offers **better development** for the nervous system.



FAQs

What is colostrum?

Colostrum is the first milk your breasts produce. You may start to notice clear or golden colored fluid leaking from your breasts during your third trimester. Rich in proteins and antibodies, colostrum nourishes your baby during the first few days and protects your newborn from viruses and bacteria; it also helps your little one expel his first stool, called meconium.



As your breastmilk transforms from colostrum to mature milk (usually 3-5 days after birth) your baby will **wet about 6 diapers/day and have at least 3 bowel movements.**

Is breastfeeding painful?

Some women experience soreness or discomfort early on in breastfeeding. If discomfort persists for more than 30 seconds, try adjusting your baby's position, as he may not be latched on properly. **Consult your healthcare provider if pain becomes an issue.**

What is mastitis?

Mastitis is a painful infection from a blocked milk duct that affects between 10% and 30% of breastfeeding women. Prevention techniques in the early months include ensuring a good latch, frequent feedings (8-12 in 24 hours) and avoiding constrictive bras. Making sure the baby has emptied the breast after each feed is also helpful. **Signs of mastitis include redness, swelling, warmth and pain in an area of the breast. Fatigue and flu-like symptoms may also appear.** You should contact a healthcare provider if you think you have mastitis so you can get quick treatment. Often, you do not have to go to the doctor's office to access treatments.

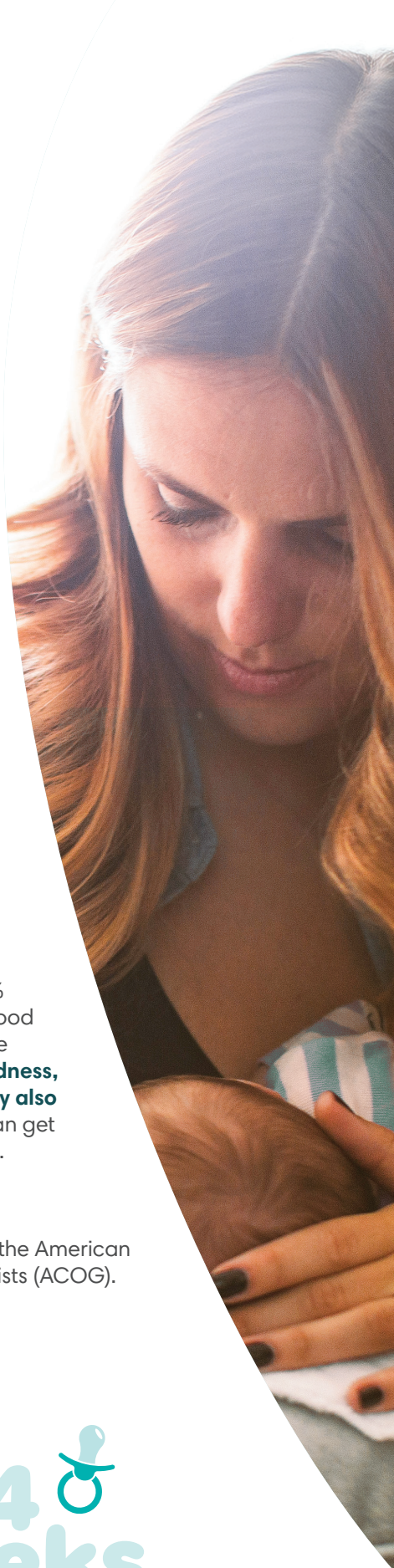
How long should I breastfeed for?

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for babies from birth up to 6 months of age by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). Breastfeeding can be continued with complementary foods up to 2 years and beyond.

Can my baby use a pacifier?

It is best to wait until your baby is at least 3 or 4 weeks old in order for him to learn how to latch onto the breast well enough and get enough milk.

3-4 
weeks



Nutrition & Breastfeeding

fyi

Your body will need approximately **450-500 additional calories/day** in order to help with milk production.



Take prenatal vitamins

Consult with your healthcare provider to determine if you should continue taking prenatal vitamins while you breastfeed.



Less caffeine

Most experts recommend limiting caffeine consumption to less than 200 mg/day, as your little one is highly sensitive to the effects of caffeine. This is equal to a 12-oz cup of coffee. As caffeine is found in teas, sodas and chocolate, make sure you include these sources in your total for the day.



Mind alcohol

It's not recommended that you consume alcohol while breastfeeding. If you choose to have an alcoholic beverage, wait two hours before breastfeeding. Bear in mind that alcohol leaves your milk the same way it leaves your bloodstream. Regularly having more than two alcoholic drinks a day can be harmful to your baby and cause drowsiness, weakness, and abnormal weight gain.



Drink water

Stay well-hydrated while breastfeeding, and make it a habit to drink a glass of water after each breastfeeding session.



Eat fish

Try to incorporate fish and seafood into your diet 2-3 times/week. These foods are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which contribute to the growth and development of your baby's brain. Some fish have higher levels of mercury, so avoid tilefish, shark, swordfish, and king mackerel. If you eat tuna, make sure you limit your consumption to 6 oz per week.

3x
week



Breastfeeding Positions

Comfort is the ultimate priority

Your little one should be fully latched, with her nose touching your breast. Your baby's mouth should comfortably be latched around your breast, without hurting or pinching.



Cradle Position

Sit with your back straight and support the lying baby in your arms. Have your baby's body turned to face you, with her tummy touching yours. Support her head in the crook of your elbow so that her face is squarely in front of your breast.

Cross Cradle Position

In the same manner as the cradle position, hold your baby so that her tummy is touching yours. Support her in the arm opposite to the side you'll be feeding her on. For example, if you are breastfeeding with your right breast, support your baby with your left arm. Your baby's bottom should remain in the crook of your left elbow, while your left hand supports their head and neck. This position allows for better control over your baby's head. You may or may not need to use pillows to support baby's head. **This is a great position for a newborn who is just starting to breastfeed.**



Football Position

Place the baby under your arm as if she were a football. Seat your baby next to you, and at the height of your waist, so that she is directly in front of you. Support her back with your forearm and tilt her head level with your breast. **This position is ideal for moms who have had a C-section.**

Side Position

Lie on your side and draw your baby near to you. Place your fingers below your breast and raise it up to help your baby latch. **This is a great position for nighttime feedings, and also for moms who have undergone a C-section,** as the weight of the baby is not in contact with the incision. Place the lower part of your arm forward so that it supports your baby's head. If you wish, place a pillow between your knees to avoid jostling.



Pumping Your Breastmilk

Wash your hands

Before you start pumping, wash your hands with soap and water and ensure the expression area, bottles, and pump parts are clean.

Using a breast pump

If you are unable to breastfeed your baby directly, you'll need to hand express your milk or use a manual or electric breast pump in order to allow you to continue making milk. Electric pumps may be a good choice when babies have a hard time latching and feeding at the breast. Some models allow you to pump from both breasts at the same time, reducing your pump time. Getting professional guidance is recommended if you need to use a pump.

Keeping it cool

Refrigerate or chill the milk after it's been pumped. If you're freezing it in bottles, leave an inch or so from the milk to the top of the container to allow the milk to expand as it freezes. Once the milk has frozen, you should tighten the bottle cap or lid, and place it in the back of your freezer.

Storing your milk

When storing your breastmilk, use hard, BPA-free plastic bottles, glass bottles or milk storage bags. If you don't use your milk straight away, you can place it in the freezer for future use. Label each container with the date you pumped.

Thawing & warming up stored milk

Use the milk with the oldest storage date first. To thaw frozen milk, place it in the refrigerator overnight, or hold it under running warm water, or set it in a container with warm water. **Don't heat the breastmilk in the microwave, since this can damage the milk and potentially burn your little one.**

Test the temperature

Test the milk's temperature by placing a few drops on your wrist; it should feel comfortably warm but not hot when you do so.



Storage Guidelines

Fresh Breastmilk Storage



Room

UP TO 77° F

Up to
4 hours

Containers should be covered. Dispose of any milk within 2 hours after baby has finished feeding.



Refrigerator

39°F & BELOW

Up to
3 days

Store milk toward the back of the refrigerator, where it's coldest.



Freezer

0°F OR COLDER

Best within **6 months**
Acceptable within **12 months**

Store milk toward the back of the freezer, where temperatures are most consistent.

Thawed Breastmilk Storage



Room

UP TO 77° F

Use within **2 hours** after reaching room temperature or after baby finishes feeding



Refrigerator

39°F & BELOW

24 hours
after completely thawed



Freezer

0°F OR COLDER

Do not refreeze

Cleaning Your Breast Pump

Clean pump

All breast pump parts that come into contact with breastmilk need to be cleaned after each use.

Use soap & warm water

Immediately after pumping, rinse the pieces that came into contact with breastmilk in cool water. No need to buy fancy sterilization equipment; thoroughly cleaning your breast shields, bottles, pump tubing and valves with dish soap and warm water for 10-15 seconds can do the trick.

Air Dry

When washing your tubing, hang it up to air dry. If condensation appears in the tubes after you've pumped, let the pump run for a few minutes until the tubing is dry.

No towels

Air drying is the safest technique for drying the pump parts. Don't use cloth towels – these can carry germs and bacteria.

Use your dishwasher

Depending on the type of breast pump you have, you may be able to wash certain parts in your dishwasher.



How to fill out

DATE 8/14/26



You can add in information by hand
(about BM's for example)



DATE _____



WAKE

☐

EAT

☐

SLEEP

☐

DIAPER

☐

1 AM

2 AM

3 AM

4 AM

5 AM

6 AM

7 AM

8 AM

9 AM

10 AM

11 AM

12 AM

1 PM

2 PM

3 PM

4 PM

5 PM

6 PM

7 PM

8 PM

9 PM

10 PM

11 PM

12 PM

TOTAL:

FEEDINGS

HOURS NAPPED

WET DIAPERS

BM

DATE _____



WAKE

☐

EAT

☐

SLEEP

☐

DIAPER

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1 AM

2 AM

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7 AM

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1 PM

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4 PM

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TOTAL:

FEEDINGS

HOURS NAPPED

WET DIAPERS

BM

DATE _____



WAKE

☐

EAT

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SLEEP

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DIAPER

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1 AM

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TOTAL:

FEEDINGS

HOURS NAPPED

WET DIAPERS

BM