

Nutrition Guide

Breastfeeding tips & techniques: the basics

When it comes to feeding your baby, it's hard to beat the benefits of breast milk.

Breast milk:

- Contains the perfect balance of nutrients to help your baby fight infection and common childhood illnesses
- Is convenient, always available, and is delivered at the right temperature
- Helps mum's uterus return to its pre-pregnant state
- Reduces the risk of breast cancer for mum
- Saves money

Learning to breastfeed

Many pregnant women are curious about whether they will succeed in breastfeeding and if they will produce enough milk. For first-time mothers, breastfeeding is a learned skill. You will want to learn as much as you can and ask for help when you need it. Good sources include your doctor, lactation consultant or other healthcare professionals, as well as breastfeeding support groups.



The following tips will help you get ready for breastfeeding and answer some of the questions that you may have:

- **Rest:** Sleep as much as you can. Give yourself time to recover. Do not try to do too much too soon. Take a nap every day, and sleep when your baby sleeps. Enjoy visitors, but remember you need to get all the rest you can in the first few weeks.
- **Feeding schedule:** Feed your baby every 1-3 hours during the first few days (beginning of session to the beginning of next session). This will help stimulate milk production, and lessen or prevent engorgement once your milk does come in.
- **Location:** Keep your baby near you to avoid having to move too much. Also store diapers, changing supplies, water or chilled juice, and a snack within easy reach. Some mothers

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enjoy sipping on cool drinking water or juice as they feed their baby, while others like to listen to soothing music, or both.

- **Comfort:** Make sure both you and your baby are as comfortable as possible when breastfeeding, using pillows or an arm chair to support the weight of your baby. Some mothers use a rolled up blanket, towel, or other soft items, rather than a pillow. Other mums find that putting something under their feet helps to support baby better by raising the “lap” area.
- **Breastfeeding support:** Ask someone to help position your baby and get the baby latched on, especially when you are first learning to breastfeed. Many mums benefit from the help of a coach, someone experienced with the skill of breastfeeding, such as a lactation consultant. Always ask for help if you need support or help in breastfeeding, or are feeling pain during nursing.
- **Support network:** Everyone wants to help out after the baby arrives. Request help until your doctor tells you that it is okay to ease back into your normal routine. Ask family, friends, and neighbours to help prepare or pick up meals, clean, do laundry, dishes, or other household chores, watch older children, and run errands. Remember, it is okay to ask for help!
- **Medications, vitamins, and other supplements:** Contact your doctor if you are taking any type of medication, vitamin, or herbal supplement, even nonprescription remedies for headaches or colds, because many medications pass through into the mother’s milk, although in very small amounts. Avoid alcohol and limit caffeine.
- **Mum’s diet:** Breast milk is all your baby needs in the first 6 months of life, but you need to continue having a well-balanced diet. Remember what you eat or drink may affect both you and your baby. Consult your doctor or dietitian for advice on healthy eating during breastfeeding.
- **Nursing bras and breast pads:** Choose nursing bras that are comfortable and fit well, providing support, but not so tight that they cut into your breasts or back. Cotton cups are better than synthetic ones, because they let more air circulate around the nipples. Breast pads are sometimes helpful to have on hand, as well as clothes that make it easy to breastfeed (shirts that unbutton or pull up are best).

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