

Nutrition Guide

Breastfeeding tips & techniques: the first weeks

Breastfeeding is a natural choice for both you and your baby, providing a wonderful bonding experience, as well as many practical benefits for both mother and baby.

Breastfeeding frequency

As your baby matures, your breast milk also matures. After your baby's birth, the first milk produced is known as colostrum. This yellowish, golden first milk is rich in antibodies and the perfect food for a newborn. Within a few days, the colostrum will be replaced with mature breast milk. Frequent feeding will help relieve the discomfort that sometimes comes with this first feeling of fullness.

Every mum wants to know how often a baby needs to eat and for how long. Here's a quick guide for you:

- Your baby will need to breastfeed every 1-3 hours, at least 9-12 times in a 24-hour period for at least 10 minutes or more
- Nursing longer than 30 minutes is not recommended, as it will lead to sore nipples
- Let your baby, not the clock, determine how long a feeding lasts

Supply-and-Demand

Breast milk production is all about Demand-and-Supply: the more a baby nurses, the more milk you will produce. If nursing frequency or time is decreased, the breasts will decrease the amount of milk they produce. Try out these suggestions:

- Allow your baby to fully drain at least one breast during each feeding
- Offer the other breast after your baby empties the first breast
- If your baby does not nurse at the second breast or does not completely drain the second breast, begin nursing on that breast at the next feeding (a fully drained breast may feel softer and empty)
- Consider attaching a safety pin to your shirt or bra strap as a reminder of which breast to start with at the next feeding
- Your baby will be drowsy and content after nursing, but be sure to call your doctor or lactation consultant if you are worried

The information provided in this fact sheet is intended to be used as a guide only. Please consult your doctor or dietitian for personalised advice.



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Waking your baby to feed

Every baby is born with his or her own temperament and need for sleep. Most babies will sleep for 18-22 hours in their first 2-3 days following birth. During the first few weeks, your baby will need to be woken up to feed. Some babies would rather sleep than eat during the first few weeks.



Here are some tips for waking and nursing your baby:

- Wake your baby during the day for feeding if 3 hours have passed since the last feeding or if your breasts are uncomfortably full
- Make sure your baby is fully awake before nursing – a half-awake baby may go back to sleep when nursing; talk to, pat, unwrap, or undress your baby to help him or her wake up, allowing 5-10 minutes before feeding to make sure your baby is fully awake
- Remember that newborns do not sleep through the night
- Get some rest by napping when your baby naps

Baby's weight

Once your milk supply is well established, your baby should gain about 20g (2/3 ounce) a day for the first 3 months. Most newborns lose a little weight in the first few days after birth. Newborns should start gaining weight after the first week. After 2 weeks, most babies are back up to their birth weight. Always consult your doctor if you have questions about your baby's weight.

Baby's diapers

After about day 4, your baby will no longer pass meconium (thick, black, or dark-green stools). Instead, your baby will have soft and yellow bowel movements, at least three times a day. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a minimum of six wet diapers a day after day 5. During the first month, your baby should wet a minimum of six diapers a day and continue to have 2-5 bowel movements. Your baby's urine should look nearly clear. Speak to your doctor if you have concerns about your baby's bowel movements.

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