

BREASTFEEDING... A PARENT'S GUIDE

Breast milk is one of the best things that your baby needs to grow and develop. It even changes to meet your baby's needs as he or she gets older. Breast milk is rich in antibodies, vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that help your baby grow healthy and strong.



BABY'S HEALTH BENEFITS

- Breast milk is easier to digest than formula
- Contains antibodies to protect and fight against illness
- Protects against childhood diseases and conditions:
 - ◇ Ear infections
 - ◇ Asthma
 - ◇ Diarrhea and vomiting
 - ◇ Respiratory illnesses
 - ◇ Reduces Childhood obesity
 - ◇ Diabetes type I & II
 - ◇ Leukemia
 - ◇ Lessens the risk of Sudden Infant Death

"I support my partner breastfeeding because it is the best thing for my baby"



HOW LONG SHOULD I BREASTFEED?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for about 6 months, followed by continued breastfeeding as complementary foods are introduced, with continuation of breastfeeding for 1 year or longer as mutually desired by mother and infant. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends breastfeeding for 2 years and continue for as long as mother and baby are comfortable.

FAMILY BENEFITS

Research states:

- Decreases a mother's risk of breast and ovarian cancer
- Helps mother bond with their newborn
- Higher IQ

Additional benefits:

- Saves money
- Safest way to feed baby during an emergency
- Breast milk does not get recalled like formula
- With breastfeeding there is no need to sterilize bottles or prepare formula
- Mother returns to pre-pregnancy weight faster
- Less time off from work and reduced doctors visit with sick infant

Question: How do I know if my baby is getting enough of my milk?

A: Most mothers make plenty of milk for their babies, but worry about having enough milk. If you are using bottles or pacifiers it can affect the amount of milk your breasts produce. Signs to watch for to tell if your baby is getting enough.

1. Number of wet diapers and bowel movements. Day 1 baby will have 1-2 wet diapers and first bowel movement usually occurs within 8 hours after birth.. Starting around day 3 your baby will have a minimum of 5-6 disposable wet diapers and 3+ bowel movements.
2. Baby should be gaining weight. From birth to 3 months old, a baby will usually gain 1-2 pounds each month.
3. A breastfed baby should be put to the breast 8-12 times in 24 hours or every 2-3 hours. Feedings should not be limited. If mother is exclusively pumping she will need to pump the same amount of times baby feeds in 24 hours.

Question: Will I need formula if I don't make enough milk?

A: The more breast milk your baby takes, the more milk your body makes. When you give your baby formula, your body will make less milk. You can increase your milk supply by nursing or pumping more often. Breast size and whether your family breastfed does not affect your milk supply. If you are unsure if you are making enough milk contact a Board Certified Lactation Consultant or your baby's pediatrician.

Question: I'm concerned my milk isn't good for the baby because I don't eat healthy foods.

A: None of these factors will cause your breast milk to be bad for your baby. Eating a variety of nutritious foods is important for your health. Your milk is always perfect for your baby. If you are concerned with your nutrition it is important to speak with your doctor or registered dietitian.

Question: Is it true that if I am stressed or suffering with depression I cannot breastfeed my baby?

A: Many people suffer from some type of stress or depression. For women, postpartum depression (PPD) can begin anytime within the first year after giving birth. Mothers do not have to stop breastfeeding if they feel stressed or have depression. Breastfeeding can lower the risk of depression, protect a women's mental health, can lower stress and increase sleep. Whether you breastfeed or not, it is important to talk to someone. Speak to your doctor or dial 2-1-1 for assistance.

Question: I've seen formula advertisements that say formula can help my baby be less fussy, less gassy, spit up less, and help with colic. Is this true?

A: Formula companies are trying to sell you a product and make claims to create doubt about the completeness of breast milk. Although the claims make it sound like formula can solve common infant concerns, babies who are fed formula are actually more likely to have these problems. Often times, if babies start formula, they will have to switch formulas several times before finding one that they can tolerate. Providing breast milk exclusively is the best way to prevent these challenges and protect your baby.

Question: If I breastfeed and give formula, will my baby get the best of both worlds?

A: Breast milk has everything a baby needs for the best growth and development. Formula is not the same as breast milk. It is man-made and not absorbed by the body the same way breast milk is. Giving even a little formula can interfere with breastfeeding and increase risks.

Question: How can the father, my partner have a meaningful role in breastfeeding?

A: Fathers can be involved by being aware of the benefits of breastfeeding and be supportive. It is very helpful to make sure mom is eating well-balanced foods. Dad can do skin-to-skin with the baby and bring baby to mom for feeding. After feeding dad can help to burp the baby. It also important for dad to support mom in the process including nursing in public places. Working together to benefit the baby's needs encourages parents' bonding. Family members including siblings could be supportive too.

Question: How can I breastfeed if I go back to work or school?

A: Breastfeeding can continue while you are at school or work. By expressing your milk it will help you feel closer to your baby even though you are separated. Pumping your milk and having your baby's caregivers feed your milk from a bottle is definitely an option you should consider. Most mothers will need to pump around 3 or 4 times while away from their to provide all the milk he or she will need. Contact your insurance company or WIC office to find out about breast pumps. Be sure to talk to a Board Certified Lactation Consultant, breastfeeding peer counselor or La Leche League leader for help to get off to a good start pumping or if you have difficulties.

Question: Is there ever a time I shouldn't breastfeed?

A: If you have a cold or flu, diarrhea and vomiting, or mastitis, keep breastfeeding as normal. Your baby won't catch the illness through your breast milk. In fact your milk will contain antibodies to reduce your baby's risk of getting the same illness. Some mothers are concerned they cannot breastfeed while taking over-the-counter or prescription medications. Many medications are safe for mother to use. It's always best to check to see if your medication is compatible or what alternatives are available with your doctor. You can use <https://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/newtoxnet/lactmed.htm> as a resource on medication safety. Mothers that are receiving chemotherapy, using illegal drugs or have HIV/AIDs should not breastfeed. Discuss any specific health issues or concerns with your doctor.



FOR MORE INFORMATION AND/OR ASSISTANCE

**MIAMI-DADE WIC BREASTFEEDING HELPLINE
786-336-1336**

**NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH & BREASTFEEDING HELPLINE
800-994-9662**

Resources:

1. World Health Organization. (2009). 10 facts on breastfeeding. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/breastfeeding/en/index.html>
2. UNICEF. (April 2018). https://www.unicef.org/nutrition/files/8_Advocacy_Brief_on_BF_in_Emergencies.pdf
3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2011). The Surgeon General's call to action to support breastfeeding. U.S. Public Health Service; Office of the Surgeon General.
4. Office on Women's Health. (2010). Breastfeeding. Retrieved from <http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/>
5. American Academy of Pediatrics. (2005). Breastfeeding and the Use of human Milk, 15(2), 496-506
6. Adapted from Denver Health

