

Off to the best start

Important information about feeding your baby

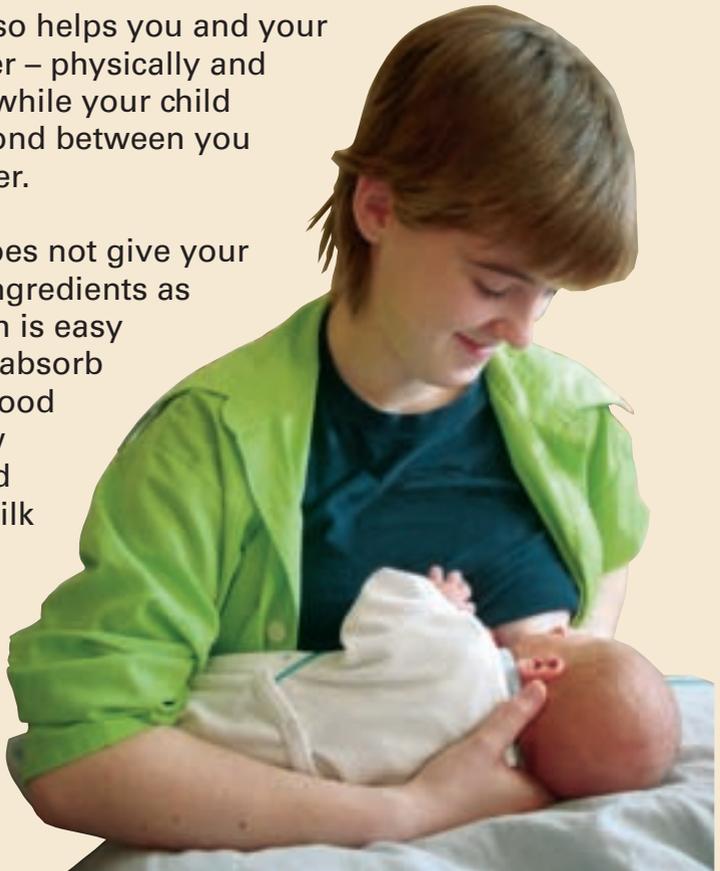


Breastfeeding – the best start for your baby

Breastfeeding gives your baby all the nutrients he needs for the first six months of life, and continues to benefit your baby along with solid foods for many months. It helps to protect him from infection and other diseases. And it reduces your chances of getting some illnesses later in life.

Breastfeeding also helps you and your baby to get closer – physically and emotionally. So while your child is feeding, the bond between you can grow stronger.

Bottle feeding does not give your baby the same ingredients as breastmilk, which is easy for your baby to absorb and is a perfect food to help him grow and develop. And infant formula milk doesn't provide protection against infection and other diseases.



In this leaflet

What does breastfeeding help protect against?	4
After your baby is born	6
How to breastfeed	7
Signs that your baby is feeding well	10
Top tips	13
Expressing milk	15
Where to find help	18



What does breastfeeding help protect against?

Ear infections

Asthma

Eczema

Chest infections

Obesity

Gastro-intestinal infections

Childhood diabetes

Urine infections





Women who breastfeed
get their figures back faster

Breast cancer

Weak bones later in life

Ovarian cancer

After your baby is born

Holding your baby against your skin straight after birth will calm your baby. It will also steady his breathing and keep him warm.

This is a great time to start your first breastfeed, because your baby will be alert and

want to feed within a couple of hours of birth. Your midwife can help you with this.

Your baby will be happier if you keep him near you and feed him whenever he is hungry. This will remind your body to produce plenty of milk.



How to breastfeed

What position should you use?

There are lots of different positions for breastfeeding. You just need to check the following:

Are your baby's head and body in a straight line?

If not, your baby might not be able to swallow easily.

Are you holding your baby close to you?

Support his neck, shoulders and back. He should be able to tilt his head back easily. And he shouldn't have to reach out to feed.



Are you comfortable?

It's worth getting comfortable before a feed, although it's ok to change your position slightly once the baby is attached to the breast.

Is your baby's nose opposite your nipple?

Your baby needs to get a big mouthful of breast from underneath the nipple. Placing your baby with his nose level with your nipple will allow him to reach up and attach to the breast well.



How should you attach your baby to your breast?

- Hold your baby close to you with his nose level with the nipple.
- Then let his head tip back a little so that his top lip can brush against your nipple. This should make him open his mouth.
- When his mouth is wide open, bring him to the breast, with his head back and chin first. His nose should be clear of the breast.
- He should take in a large mouthful of breast – not just the nipple. Your nipple should go towards the roof of his mouth.



Signs that your baby is feeding well

- Your baby has a large mouthful of breast.
- Your baby's chin is touching your breast.
- It doesn't hurt you to feed (although the first few sucks may feel strong).
- If you can see the dark skin around your nipple, you should see more dark skin above your baby's top lip than below his bottom lip.
- Your baby's cheeks stay rounded during sucking.
- Your baby rhythmically takes long sucks and swallows. It is normal for him to pause sometimes.
- Your baby finishes the feed and comes off the breast on his own.





How do you know that your baby is getting enough milk?

- Your baby will appear content and satisfied after most feeds.
- He should be healthy and gaining weight after the first two weeks.
- Your breasts and nipples should not be sore.
- After the first few days, your baby should have at least six wet nappies a day.
- From day 4 he should also pass at least two yellow stools every day, for the first few weeks.



Top tips

Make sure your baby is properly attached to your breast (see page 9)

- You will have a good supply of milk and your baby will get a good feed.
- It will help stop your breasts getting sore.



Try not to give your baby other food or drink

- The more you breastfeed your baby the more milk you will produce. Giving other food or drink will reduce your milk supply.
- You might increase the chance of your baby getting ill.



Try not to give your baby a dummy

- Babies who have a dummy sometimes find it difficult to remember how to attach to the breast.
- Your baby will be less likely to feed when he needs to, so won't take in as much milk.

Don't be scared to ask for help

- It can take a while before you feel confident. You can ask your midwife, health visitor or peer supporter to help you with breastfeeding.

For information on healthy eating while breastfeeding see www.eatwell.gov.uk



Expressing milk

What does 'expressing milk' mean?

- Expressing milk means squeezing milk out of your breast.
- You can express milk by hand or with a hand pump or an electric pump.
- If you use a pump, try it before you buy, if possible. Different pumps suit different women. Always make sure a pump is clean and sterile before you use it.

Why express milk?

- If you are away from your baby or returning to work, you may wish to express milk so that somebody else can feed your baby.



Why express by hand?

- If your breasts feel uncomfortably full.
- If your baby isn't sucking well and you want to give him breastmilk.
- If you don't want to buy or use a pump to express milk.
- In the first few days it is easier to express by hand.

How to express milk by hand

1. Cup your breast and feel back from the end of the nipple to where the texture of your breast feels different.
2. Using your thumb and index finger, gently squeeze this area – this shouldn't hurt.
3. Release the pressure and then repeat again and again, building up a rhythm. Avoid sliding your fingers over the skin. Milk should start to flow.
4. When the flow slows down, express from the other breast. Keep changing breasts until the milk stops or drips very slowly.
5. If the milk doesn't flow, try moving your fingers slightly towards the nipple or further away. Or try a gentle breast massage.



Storing milk

Remember to use a sterilised container to put the milk in.

You can store milk in the fridge for up to 5 days at 4°C or lower (usually at the back).

Breastmilk can be stored for two weeks in the ice compartment of a fridge or for up to six months in a freezer.

Defrost frozen breastmilk in the fridge and once thawed use it straight away.

Expressing milk for a baby who is premature or ill

It is important to start expressing your milk as soon as possible after your baby is born.

In order to ensure that you produce plenty of milk, you will need to express at least six to eight times in 24 hours, including during the night.

Ask the hospital staff about holding your baby in skin-to-skin contact. This can help with bonding and keeping up your milk supply.

If you are freezing breastmilk because your baby is premature or ill, ask the staff caring for the baby for advice.



Where to find help

Don't be afraid to ask for support or advice to make breastfeeding work for you and your baby.

Speak to your midwife or health visitor, or contact one of the voluntary organisation breastfeeding helplines below.

National Breastfeeding Helpline

0300 100 0212

www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk

Staffed by volunteers from:

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers

www.abm.me.uk

The Breastfeeding Network

www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

The Breastfeeding Network Supportline in Bengali/Sylheti

0300 456 2421

La Leche League

0845 120 2918

www.laleche.org.uk

NCT Breastfeeding Line

0300 330 0771

www.nct.org.uk

UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative

UNICEF is the world's leading children's charity.

The Baby Friendly Initiative provides training and assessment for hospitals and community health services to enable them to give breastfeeding mothers the help and support they need to breastfeed successfully. Visit www.babyfriendly.org.uk

For online information
about breastfeeding, visit
www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk



National Breastfeeding Helpline

0300 100 0212

Lines are open 9.30am–9.30pm

Call the helpline for local help and support. Your call will be answered by the nearest trained volunteer in your area. She will answer your call when she can.

Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed your baby. If you decide not to breastfeed or to stop breastfeeding, it is possible to restart but it will be difficult. Giving formula milk to a breastfed baby will reduce your breastmilk supply.

You do not need to eat any special foods while breastfeeding, but it is a good idea for you, just like everyone else, to eat a healthy diet. It is recommended that all pregnant and breastfeeding women take a daily supplement of 10 mcg of Vitamin D.



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