



# 10

## Valuable Tips for Successful Breastfeeding

Today, most mothers are breastfeeding their babies

*These 10 Valuable Tips will help make your breastfeeding experience more successful and enjoyable.*



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— Public Health Agency of Canada

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## *Breastfeed Right After Birth*

Cuddle your baby on your chest to welcome him or her gently into the world. When you and your baby are **skin to skin**, covered lightly together, your milk production and baby's feeding reflexes are triggered. This means baby will start looking for the breast and more breast milk will be made sooner. Babies are often more alert and interested in feeding in the first hour following birth.

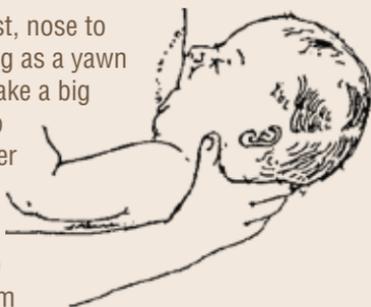
Remain skin to skin with your baby until after a successful breastfeed. This will help baby to stay warm and reduce stress, helping you both to recover from the birth. For caesarean births, the mother or father can hold the baby skin to skin until the baby can enjoy his or her first feed.

## *How to Feed Your Baby*

- Look for your baby's **early signs** of wanting to feed, such as rooting, licking her lips or putting her hands to her mouth. Crying is a late hunger cue.
- Sit or lie down comfortably, using pillows for support and comfort if necessary.
- Relax your shoulders and bring your baby to your breast rather than your breast to baby.



- Hold your baby close, tummy to mummy, nose to nipple, chin to breast and bottom tucked in to your body. Support your baby's neck and shoulders firmly without pushing the back of your baby's head as this often makes the baby push away from the breast.
- Support your breast by holding four fingers underneath, away from the areola (dark area), with your thumb on top. Expressing a few drops of milk will awaken your baby's senses of taste and smell.
- Rest your baby's chin on the breast, nose to nipple until her mouth opens as big as a yawn and she moves her head back to take a big mouthful of the breast. You can also gently touch your baby's lips until her mouth opens very wide.
- When your baby feels your nipple with her tongue, her lips will close over the areola and nipple and form a seal; both lips should be rolled outwards. You will feel your baby suckling gently at first and then deeply and rhythmically, one or two sucks per swallow, with little pauses to rest.
- When your baby comes off the breast or is no longer suckling actively, burp her and offer the other breast.
- If you need to take your baby off the breast, gently place a finger in the corner of her mouth until you break the suction.



There are many breastfeeding positions; find the one that is most comfortable for you and your baby. If you have had a caesarean birth, you may need help to position yourself and your baby comfortably. Ask for help from nurses, your doctor, midwife, or a lactation consultant.





## Getting Started

The first milk is called *colostrum*, a fluid rich in vitamins, protein and immune factors to protect your baby.

A newborn's stomach is very small and cannot hold a large amount of milk – that is why your early milk is very concentrated and why babies want to feed often in the beginning.

The chart below shows the average size of a newborn's stomach and how much milk it can hold.



Learn how to **express your milk by hand** so that you can attract your baby's attention by putting a few drops of breast milk onto your nipple, to help baby start a feed or, if needed, to relieve breast fullness. At the end of a feed, you can also express a few more drops of milk and gently rub them into your nipples to help prevent drying and cracking.

Feeding your baby often will also help increase your milk supply. The more your baby breastfeeds – the more milk you will produce – “Supply and Demand”.

### **Watch The Baby Not The Clock!**

Instead of timing feeds by the clock, look for your baby's **early signs** of wanting to feed, such as rooting, licking his lips or putting his hands to his mouth.

Babies need to eat often in the first weeks – 8 or more times in 24 hours. This establishes active milk production and ensures that your baby regains his birth weight by the second week of life. Night feeds are important to establish breastfeeding and to maintain milk production.

Mother's milk is easily digested. When your baby is breastfeeding well and often, **there is no need to supplement with food or other liquids**, not even water (you should still give your baby vitamin D drops – see #4).

**The usual pattern is:** feed your baby on one breast until he stops suckling, then a burp or diaper change, and then offer the other breast. The next time you breastfeed your baby, start with the breast on which he finished the last time.

Some babies prefer several “short courses”; others prefer one long feeding. Don’t rush your baby – take your time.

### ***Signs Your Baby is Getting Enough Breast Milk:***

Weight gain is a very good sign that your baby is breastfeeding well. By 2 weeks of age, your baby will most likely have regained his or her birth weight and will gain, on average, 5 or more ounces (141 grams) each week after that. Another positive sign to look for is 6 or more wet diapers a day by day 6 and frequent bowel movements.

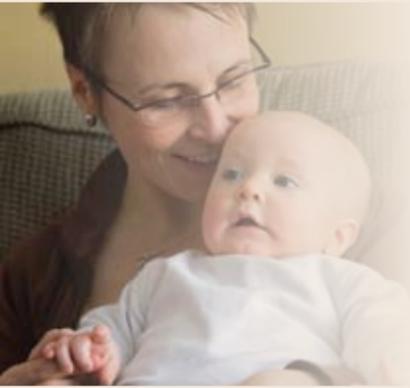
The first 4 to 6 weeks are a learning period while your body establishes your milk supply and you become more at ease with breastfeeding and understanding your baby’s cues. Time, patience, and humour can all help!

## *Milk Production*

The more your baby breastfeeds, the more milk you produce. As your baby gets older, he may breastfeed for a shorter time or less frequently and be satisfied.

Your baby will have periods of growth spurts in the first few months. During these growth spurts your baby will feed more often for a few days, to satisfy an increased appetite. During these times, your breast milk will increase to meet your baby’s needs.





## The Complete Food

Research shows that breast milk is so important that it is the only food or drink your baby needs for the *first 6 months of life*. Remarkably, as your baby grows your milk will also change to keep up with your baby's needs and continues to have just the right amount of nutrients\*. Breast milk also contains antibodies and other immune factors that help protect against infections and disease — benefits that last a lifetime.

Beginning at 6 months of age babies need to replenish their iron reserves by adding a variety of foods in addition to breast milk, which continues to provide nutrition and protection. Many mothers continue to breastfeed until their babies are two years old or more.

*\*New mothers should note that since sunlight is the principal source of vitamin D for all people, a vitamin D supplement of 10 ug (400 IU) is recommended for all breastfed babies in Canada to correct for a lack of exposure to sunlight. This supplement should be given from birth until the baby's diet includes at least 10 ug (400IU) per day of vitamin D from other foods or until he or she is 1 year old.*

Breastfeeding has many health benefits for mom too, including nurturing a special relationship between mother and baby. Breast milk is convenient, always the right temperature, economical and better for the environment!



## Looking After Mom

In the early days, try to rest when your baby sleeps.

Eat healthy meals and drink when you feel thirsty. When your baby feeds, you may want to have a snack and something to drink.

If your nipples are tender, make sure your baby is latched properly to your breast when feeding (see #1). Ask a nurse, midwife, lactation consultant or a successfully breastfeeding mother for help to achieve a comfortable breastfeeding technique.

For the first few days, expose your nipples to air or light after each feeding. Allow some breast milk to dry on your nipples; it has lubricating and anti-infective properties.

If your breasts get swollen and painful (engorged), **cold compresses decrease swelling**, then gentle massaging and warmth (warm towels or taking warm showers) will help the milk to flow. Expressing some milk before feeding to relieve fullness and breastfeeding more frequently will help your breasts to feel more comfortable.

## 6 *Working and Breastfeeding*

Your baby can have all the benefits of your breast milk even if you plan to go back to work or school.

When breastfeeding is well established, you can express milk and leave it with your caregiver for feedings throughout the day. Your breast milk can be stored in the refrigerator (3 days) or frozen (about 6 months). Refrigerate or freeze breast milk in clean bottles or bags and date them.

**Warm up the breast milk by standing it in hot tap water before it is used.** Microwaving breast milk, or heating it on the stove, is not recommended because it can cause a loss of Vitamin C content and some of the milk's special anti-infective properties. Microwaving and stove heating also causes the milk to have hot spots that can scald your baby.

Ask your employer about some flexibility to have breastfeeding or pumping breaks, and access to refrigeration to store your breast milk. Some mothers have childcare facilities at their place of work, school, or nearby, so they can breastfeed during their breaks.



## 7 *Breastfeeding and Pregnancy*

Exclusive breastfeeding (no food or liquids other than breast milk are given to baby) for the first 6 months of baby's life may delay the return of your menstruation, but ovulation can still occur, so you and your partner should discuss other birth control methods with your doctor, nurse or midwife.





## Thoughtful Reminders

Try to sleep when your baby sleeps.

Accept and/or ask for help with housework and meals from your partner, family and friends.

Invite visitors only when you feel ready.

Eat healthy and drink when you feel thirsty. You'll find you may be extra thirsty, so have a glass of water, milk or juice every time the baby nurses. See *Eating Well with Canada's*

*Food Guide* ([www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide)) for information on healthy eating and balanced nutrition.

While you are breastfeeding, you may gradually lose some of the extra weight gained during pregnancy as it provides part of the energy needed to produce breast milk.

Remember that cigarette smoke is harmful, especially to babies. If you smoke, it is still important to breastfeed but look for ways to decrease your baby's exposure to cigarette and second hand smoke.

Alcohol and other drugs can pass into your breast milk and may harm your baby. Check with your doctor, nurse, midwife, lactation consultant or Mother Risk if in doubt about any medications or other substances you are using that might affect your breast milk (Infoline# 1-877-327-4636 or [www.motherisk.org](http://www.motherisk.org)).



## Talk to Others

Motherhood and fatherhood are new roles that need to be learned together. Keep the lines of communication open!

Contact with other breastfeeding mothers is important for confident breastfeeding.

Don't keep concerns to yourself. There are many groups and individuals available to help you, including: public health nurses, lactation consultants, the La Leche League, your doctor or midwife, family members, or friends who have breastfed. **For more information on where to get breastfeeding advice and support please visit the Public Health Agency of Canada at the following address: [www.publichealth.gc.ca/breastfeeding](http://www.publichealth.gc.ca/breastfeeding).**

Do something fun every day; relax in the bathtub, take a walk with your baby, keep in touch with family and friends – don't become isolated.

# 10

## *Enjoy Your Baby*

Holding your baby close stimulates all of her senses. A baby who is smiled at, talked to and cuddled will develop a sense of security. Breastfeeding is more than simply providing nutrients and calories for physical growth – it contributes to an intimate and special relationship.

You and your baby have the right to breastfeed anywhere, anytime and there are many techniques to help you achieve this comfortably. Ask your friends, family, midwife, nurse or lactation consultant, or attend a breastfeeding support group to see how it can be done.



## *Breastfeeding Friendly*



ANYTIME. ANYWHERE.

