



# BREASTFEEDING BASICS FOR MOMS: Your Breastfeeding Questions Answered



## Why should I breastfeed?

Breastmilk is the best food for your baby because it:

- Has all the nutrients your baby needs for proper growth and development
- May reduce the risk of ear infections and colds
- May reduce the risk of obesity, diabetes, and other diseases
- Is easier for your baby to digest
- Is always the right temperature, never too hot and never too cold

It's healthier for you, too! Breastfeeding may:

- Help you recover more quickly from childbirth
- Reduce your risk for certain breast and ovarian cancer and type 2 diabetes
- Help you lose weight after childbirth



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**WIC  
BREASTFEEDING  
SUPPORT**

*LEARN TOGETHER. GROW TOGETHER.*

## How often should I breastfeed my baby?

Newborn babies breastfeed frequently, about 8 to 12 times in 24 hours. Feed your baby when he or she shows signs of hunger, such as:

- Sucking on hands or fingers
- Smacking lips or opening mouth when lips are touched
- Rooting or turning their head to search for mother's nipple
- Squirming or restless movements while asleep

Many moms think crying is the only sign that their baby is hungry. But, it's actually a sign of distress. Hungry babies will show signs of hunger before they begin to cry. Watching for and responding early to your baby's hunger signs may help prevent them from crying.



### Your body is amazing!

Did you know: as you breastfeed your baby, your body adjusts to make the right amount of milk? Putting your baby to your breast early and often will help your body keep up with your baby's growing tummy.

The more breast milk your baby drinks from you, the more milk you will produce. This is called *supply and demand*, and it is very important to the success of breastfeeding.

## How will I know my baby is getting enough?

You can be assured that your baby is getting plenty of milk in a few ways. One way is to count the number of wet diapers and poops. The color, texture, and frequency of your breastfed baby's poops will change as your baby grows.

The chart to the right offers a guide for the frequency and color of your baby's daily poops and wet diapers. The boxes show the smallest number of diapers for most babies. It is okay if your baby has more diapers than what is shown. Your baby may have more than six poops a day after the first week. After 6 weeks, there may be fewer dirty diapers.

Another way to tell if your baby is getting enough milk is weight gain. Don't worry if your baby loses a little weight in the first few days—that's normal. Talk to your baby's doctor to make sure your baby is gaining the right amount of weight.

Baby's Age	Wet	Poops
DAY 1 (birthday)	○	●
DAY 2	○○	●●●
DAY 3	○○○○○	●●●
DAY 4	○○○○○○	●●●
DAY 5	○○○○○○○	●●●
DAY 6	○○○○○○○	●●●
DAY 7	○○○○○○○	●●●



## Can I feed my baby both breast milk and formula?

Feeding your baby both breast milk and formula in the first month can decrease your milk supply. If your baby gets full with formula and does not breastfeed, your breasts will make less milk.

## Why does it feel like I'm not making any milk?

The first milk new mothers produce is called colostrum. Colostrum is a sticky yellowish substance full of vitamins and minerals. It provides your baby with important immunities and nourishment. Though it may not seem like a lot, it is enough to fill your baby's stomach in the first days.

At birth, your baby's tummy is no bigger than a toy marble (about 1 to 2 teaspoons). By day 10, your baby's stomach grows to the size of a ping-pong ball (about 2 ounces). Your milk supply will increase within a few days to keep up with your baby's needs.

## Why do my breasts hurt when my baby nurses?

You may feel pain if your baby is not positioned properly or not latching on correctly to breastfeed. Talk to WIC breastfeeding staff for help with positioning and latching. Mothers, grandmothers, sisters, other relatives, and friends who have breastfed their babies can be good sources of information, too!

## How do I prepare to go back to work if I am breastfeeding?

If you are returning to work soon after your baby is born, it is best to make a plan about how to work and breastfeed. Find a day care center or babysitter near your job and talk about your plans to breastfeed. You can use a breast pump to collect and store milk for your baby to have while you are at work. WIC can help you learn about pumping and storing breast milk. You should start to pump a week before you return to work to ensure you have a good supply.



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For more resources visit:  
[WICBreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov](http://WICBreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov)

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