

Helpful Tips for Breastfeeding

How soon should I breastfeed my baby?

Unless your baby needs immediate medical attention, you should have skin-to-skin contact with your baby right away after giving birth. You should breastfeed within the first hour, even if it means breastfeeding before your baby is weighed or bathed.

How long should I breastfeed?

You should breastfeed for at least the first six months of your baby's life. You should not give your baby other foods or liquids during this time. You can keep breastfeeding for as long as you and your baby want, but you are encouraged to do it for at least one year.

Are there any reasons why I shouldn't breastfeed?

Most mothers can breastfeed. Women who have breast implants, breast reductions, infections after delivery, or who have babies who are tongue-tied, have jaundice, or are in intensive care can all try to breastfeed. However, mothers who have HIV should not breastfeed.

If you or your baby is having trouble breastfeeding, talk to your doctor right away. A breastfeeding expert can work with you, sometimes even before your baby is born, to help make breastfeeding easier.

What is a lactation consultant?

A lactation consultant is an expert in breastfeeding. He or she can help you if you are having problems (for

example, if your baby has trouble latching onto your nipple, if you have pain with breastfeeding, or if you don't make enough milk). The consultant may even be able to help you at home once you leave the hospital.

What if I don't have enough milk for my baby?

If you think you are not making enough milk, talk to your doctor or lactation consultant. Be sure to drink 60 to 80 ounces of fluids per day and eat a healthy diet of fruits, vegetables, and proteins. Feed your baby whenever he or she seems hungry (usually 10 to 12 times a day). Each feeding can last about 20 to 30 minutes (10 to 15 minutes on each breast), but do not watch the clock. Watch your baby to see when he or she is finished eating. Feeding your baby whenever he or she is hungry will help you make more milk.

What if I have nipple or breast pain?

During the first week of breastfeeding, it is normal for your nipples to be sensitive for about 30 seconds to one minute after the baby latches on. If the pain lasts longer than the first week, you have cracked or bleeding nipples, or you have a fever, talk to your doctor or lactation consultant.

The pain can be caused by your baby not latching correctly. You could also have pain because your nipples are cracked, your breasts are overfilling with milk, or you have an infection in your breast. Even

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This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <https://familydoctor.org>.

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if you are having any of these problems, you should keep breastfeeding.

If your breasts are painful because they are overfilling with milk, some medicines, massage, moist heat, or pumping out breast milk could help. If you have nipple pain or dryness, you can use breast milk or moisturizers to soften the nipple.

Can I return to work and still breastfeed?

You should breastfeed your baby during your time off. When you go back to work, you can start pumping and storing your breast milk. You will need to pump as often as your baby typically feeds. Speak to your employer about your plan to breastfeed when you return to work. Many states have laws to protect breastfeeding women at work. Your doctor or lactation consultant can help you decide which breast pump is right for you. They can also help you make a lasting plan to breastfeed while working.

Am I allowed to breastfeed in public?

Almost all states allow breastfeeding in any location, even public places. No state specifically bans public breastfeeding. Laws differ in each state. To learn more about your state laws, go to <http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/breastfeeding-state-laws.aspx>.

Should I give my baby vitamins while breastfeeding?

Breastfed infants should be given vitamin D (400 IU per day) in a multivitamin or vitamin D drops. This will help prevent your baby from getting rickets (a bone problem that usually happens in children). You do not need to give your baby any other vitamins unless your doctor tells you to.

What medicines can I take while breastfeeding?

Most medicines used after giving birth are safe. Ibuprofen (one brand: Motrin), acetaminophen (one brand: Tylenol), antibiotics, and many other medicines are also safe to use while breastfeeding. Tell your doctor that you are breastfeeding so he or she can help you pick medicines that are safe. If you have questions about over-the-counter or prescription medicines while breastfeeding, ask your doctor or call the Infant Risk Center at 1-806-352-2519.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

AAPFs' Patient Information Resource

<https://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/women/pregnancy/birth/019.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/index.htm>

Infant Risk Center, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

<http://www.infantrisk.com>
1-806-352-2519

La Leche League International

<http://www.llli.org>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/>

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/>

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