

# Feeding Your Baby

## 12 Reasons to Choose Breast-feeding

Your milk is the perfect food for your baby and has many advantages over artificial formula.

1. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusively breast-feeding babies during the first six months in order to provide optimal growth and development. They also recommend continuing to breast-feed through the first year of life and as long as both mom and baby would like beyond the first year.
2. Breast-feeding provides protection from illnesses including diarrhea, pneumonia, meningitis, ear infections, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Bottle-fed babies are 15 times more likely to be hospitalized in the first four months of life.
3. Breast-feeding provides long-term health advantages for baby, fewer allergies, less incidence of diabetes, and other autoimmune system disorders.
4. Breast milk changes to meet baby's nutritional needs as baby grows – from day to day and month to month.
5. Breast-feeding promotes brain growth. Breast-fed babies have lower incidence of learning disabilities.
6. Breast milk is easy for baby to digest.
7. Breast-fed babies are held and cuddled frequently which promotes less crying and is a good beginning for positive emotional health.
8. Breast milk tastes different every time the baby eats. It helps develop your baby's sense of taste and smell.
9. Breast-feeding reduces a mother's risk of premenopausal breast cancer and endometrial cancer.
10. Breast-feeding causes the release of endorphins, which help mothers feel relaxed and content.
11. Breast milk is always ready and available, night feedings are more restful – the ultimate convenience food.
12. Breast milk is free! Formula costs nearly \$1,500 for the first year.

# Breast-feeding Your Baby

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## Benefits of Breast-feeding For Baby:

Provides protection from many illnesses including diarrhea, pneumonia, meningitis, ear infections, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Provides long-term health advantages, such as fewer allergies, decreased risk of obesity, and lower incidence of diabetes, and other autoimmune system disorders.

Breast milk changes to meet your baby's nutritional needs as he or she grows – from day to day and month to month.

Breast milk is easy for baby to digest.

Breast milk tastes different every time your baby eats. This helps develop your baby's sense of taste and smell.

Breast milk is always ready and available.

## Benefits of Breast-feeding For Mom:

Breast-feeding helps the uterus contract, which limits the bleeding experienced after delivery.

Breast-feeding causes the release of prolactin, the “mothering” hormone, which helps mothers feel more relaxed.

Women who breast-feed also tend to lose their pregnancy weight more quickly.

Studies show that breast-feeding reduces a woman's risk of breast and ovarian cancer, and decreases the risk of osteoporosis.

As with any new skill, it may take practice for breast-feeding to become “second nature” for both you and your baby. We hope this information supports your breast-feeding experience.

## Steps to Promote Successful Breast-feeding:

**Breast-feed “on cue.”** Feed your baby when he or she shows early feeding cues and until content. Breast-feed for as long as your baby is actively nursing.

**Breast-feed your baby at least 8-12 times per day.** This will give your baby the fluid and nutrition he or she needs, and encourage a good milk supply.

**“Room-in” with your baby.** Keep your baby with you as much as possible. This will allow you to identify his or her early feeding cues. Spend as much time with baby skin-to-skin as possible.

**Make sure your baby is latched correctly.** Look for a wide-open mouth, flared upper and lower lips, and absence of pain while nursing. Your baby should be facing you, tummy against your body, with his or her chin deep into the breast and his or her nose close.

**Avoid giving your baby a pacifier in the early weeks.** This decreases the time your baby gets to learn how to breast-feed, possibly affecting your milk supply and your baby’s weight gain. Some babies can have a hard time learning how to suck on a breast nipple after using a pacifier. Waiting until breast-feeding is well established will allow your baby to learn how to suck at the breast correctly.

# A Partner's Role in Successful Breast-feeding

You and your partner have made the important decision to breast-feed your new baby. It is unlikely that this was something you learned about in school, and you may be wondering what your role will be in this process. The first thing you can do is learn about breast-feeding. Support from you is a key factor in successful breast-feeding. Here is how you can give your partner the support she needs:

## Help With Baby Care:

Feeding is only one of the many tasks involved in the nurturing of your baby. Comforting your baby, bathing, changing diapers, playing, walking, and singing are all activities you and your partner can share.

## Give Mom Encouragement:

Since you want your baby to get the benefits of breast milk, then you need to provide encouragement when your partner feels discouraged. Half of all American women who breast-feed give it up in the early weeks, usually because they think they don't have enough milk. When your partner is having a bad day or feels that breast-feeding isn't working out, you can help. You can remind her that all babies are fussy some of the time. You can tell her that just because the baby is crying does not mean that he or she is hungry. If she is worried about her milk supply, you should encourage her to nurse more often.

## Help Mom Feel Comfortable:

Observe her breast-feeding in the early days. Does she look relaxed? Does she need an extra pillow, a glass of water, a neck/shoulder massage, or just a hug and kiss? Help her to get enough to eat by bringing her a nutritious snack. Encourage her to rest/nap while the baby is sleeping during the day.

## Give Mom a Break:

Give mom a chance to have some time just for herself by assuming the baby care for an hour or so. This can be a special opportunity for you to be alone with your baby. Here are some suggestions for how you can interact with your baby:

- Babies need skin contact, touching, and snuggling. They need to be held to feel loved.
- Babies need to be changed and bathed.
- Babies need visual stimulation. Let the baby look into your eyes. Let him or her look at the world over your shoulder. Take her on a guided tour of your home. Tell your baby how your day went.
- Babies need to interact. As you hold your baby, make the same sounds he or she makes. It can become a game even with very young babies. Talk to your baby; sing if you like. Take the baby for a walk in the carriage or the carrier. Get to know your baby.

## Be a Breast-feeding Advocate:

An advocate is a person who speaks for someone when she cannot speak for herself. Your advocacy role may take many forms:

- Answer telephone calls or doorbells when she needs to rest or desires privacy for nursing.
- Bring the baby to her to nurse and return the baby to bed afterward. This is a really important way to show your love and support! You can also keep the baby in the bed with you.
- Voice your support of her breast-feeding to “well-meaning” people who make the statements like, “Are you sure he/she has enough milk?” (You answer, “Yes, because the baby has six to eight wet diapers a day.”)

The time when your baby is young and nursing is so often is a tiring time, but it’s a short time in the baby’s life. Women who have breast-fed look back on the experience with pride. Partners who have been the support person can also look back with pride. Many women look back at breast-feeding and say, “I couldn’t have done it without their support.”

# How to Bottle Feed

Newborns need supportive nutrition and plenty of loving—two things you can supply while formula feeding. There are many formulas, so ask your health care provider which is best for your baby.

## Safety Tip:

Don't heat breast milk or formula in a microwave. This can result in uneven heating and might burn your baby's mouth. Instead, warm the bottle by placing it in a bowl of warm water. Do not use hot water. (Hot water should never be used to heat formula or breast milk because of the risk of burning the child.) Test the formula on your wrist to ensure a warm temperature before feeding it to your baby.

## Facts on Formula:

Baby formula can be cow-based or soy-based. If your family has a history of allergies, your baby's doctor may suggest a specific type of formula to use.

Ready-to-feed formula is the easiest, but it also costs the most.

Concentrated powder and liquid formulas need to be mixed with water before using. Follow the package directions closely. Using too much or too little water may be harmful to your baby.

## Hold Baby and Bottle:

- Cradle your baby in your arm, holding the head slightly higher than the chest.
- Stroke the cheek nearest to you. When your baby's mouth opens, place the nipple on the tongue well into your baby's mouth.
- Tip the bottle so the nipple fills with milk. For your baby's sake, never prop the bottle.
- Feeding your infant can be a time of bonding and trust building. Hold your baby close to your body, make eye contact, and talk to your baby.
- Proper positioning can decrease the chance of your baby choking on the formula.
- Don't let your baby fall asleep while sucking on a bottle. This can lead to tooth decay in the future.

## Burping Your Baby:

- Burp your baby after ½ to 1 ounce of formula and when he or she is done feeding.
- Your baby can be burped sitting up while you hold the baby's jaw, lying face-down across your lap, or with his or her belly against your shoulder.
- If your baby seems hungry but isn't eating well, you can try a different shaped nipple. You might also check the nipple opening. Some babies prefer a faster flow of milk and can be frustrated when the flow is too slow. If your baby is gagging and choking, you might need a nipple with a smaller hole, which makes the flow slower and easier to swallow.

## Bottle Care:

- Wash your hands every time you fill or offer a bottle.
- Start with 8 four-ounce bottles.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for care of bottles and nipples before using them.
- Clean used bottles and nipples with hot soapy water. Be sure to rinse both completely.
- Bottles can be filled up to 24 hours ahead of time, but you must keep them refrigerated until they're used.

### Resource:

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