

Breastfeeding: getting started

1. Which position should I put my baby in?

Watch your baby during breastfeeding. If they're in the correct position, you will notice the following:

1. Your baby's tummy is against your tummy.
2. Initial position: the baby's nose is level with the nipple.
3. Suckling reflex: the baby opens their mouth and licks the nipple.
4. The baby takes to the breast.
5. The baby's mouth is wide open during suckling, with their head tilting slightly backwards.
6. GOOD TECHNIQUE: the mouth covers much of the areola. The chin, and possibly the nose too, touch the breast. The lips are pursed outward. The baby is feeding. POOR TECHNIQUE: the lips only cover the nipple itself.
7. After nursing, the baby releases the nipple and has had enough.
GOOD TECHNIQUE: the nipple is elongated and round. POOR TECHNIQUE: the nipple has a flattened shape (poor suckling technique).

2. How do I know if my baby is feeding well?

1. In most cases, the baby begins feeding by making some rapid suckling movements to activate the flow of milk. As soon as the milk begins to flow, they drink deep and long gulps, pausing occasionally to catch their breath.
2. You will hear and see the baby swallowing. Their cheeks bulge during suckling. Movement between their ears and temples can be seen.
3. The baby's mouth is moist and the baby is full after feeding.

3. How should I break away after breastfeeding?

1. Insert your finger into the corner of the baby's mouth, between their gums.
2. The vacuum is then broken and the baby lets go. This action is not normally painful.

4. How do I know if my baby wants to feed?

1. The baby is licking their hands, with their eyes still closed.
2. The baby is clenching their fists.
3. The baby is licking their lips, turning their head and trying to find your breast.
4. The baby is bringing their hands to their mouth.
5. The baby appears tense.
6. The baby is crying.

5. How often should I feed my baby?

Feeding pattern over a 24-hour period: 0-2 week(s)

Feeding pattern over a 24-hour period: from 2 weeks

The number of feeds over 24 hours varies from one baby to the next. It is best to feed on demand. For the first two weeks of the baby's life, they tend to feed every two hours or more frequently. After 2 weeks, some babies can wait up to 4 hours or more between feeds, while others remain in a pattern of every 2 hours, or even more frequently. If you have any concerns or questions, please contact your district nurse.

6. How do I know if my baby is drinking enough?

Nappy stools

In the first week of a baby's life, their stools evolve from thick black meconium to liquid yellow-orange stools: meconium – transitional stools – breastfeeding stools.

Number of stools at 0-6 weeks

In the first few weeks, a baby will produce stools at least 3 times per day.

Number of stools after 6 weeks

From 6 weeks, the stools evolve differently for each child. Some babies need their nappy changed 3-6 times per day. Other babies will produce stools just 1-2 times per week. Both are considered normal.

Nappy urine

Babies urinate regularly, once they are 4 days old, the baby may urinate up to six times every 24 hours.

Weight

Expect an average weight loss of around 7% in the first week.

Day of birth = birth weight

± Day 3 = birth weight – 7%

± Day 14 = birth weight

± Week 3 = birth weight + around 100-200 grams

7. How should I store expressed breast milk?

Fresh breast milk expressed in hygienic conditions using a breast pump can be stored in sealed sterilised bottles or jars or in sterile breast milk storage bags for:

- 4 hours at a room temperature of up to 25°C or
- 72 hours at the back of the refrigerator (0-4°C) or
- 2 weeks in the fridge's freezer compartment or
- 3-6 months in the freezer (-18°C or below).

Tip: don't forget to note the date the milk was expressed.

How should I defrost frozen breast milk?

- Slow defrost: at the back of the fridge, to keep for up to 24 hours. Do not refreeze.
- Quick defrost: run under tap water (from cold to a warmer temperature). You can use the breast milk straight away to feed your baby. It should not be kept.

How should I store breast milk for premature babies and sick children?

Follow the advice of your doctor or hospital.