

# *E Nurture*

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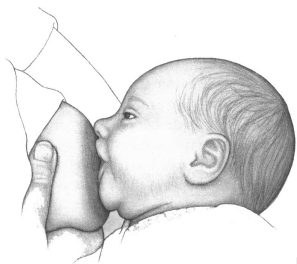
A newsletter for breastfeeding mothers  
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## Breastfeeding Basics

**Breastmilk is the best food for your baby**, and it is all that she needs for the first six months. It contains all the proper nutrients in just the right amounts to help your baby grow and develop. It is easily digested. It also contains antibodies, produced by your body, which help protect the baby from infections and disease.

**Wash your hands each time before you breast-feed**, but it is not necessary to wash your breasts before feeding. Natural secretions of the nipple area are antibacterial and lubricating. Before you begin breastfeeding, make sure you are in a comfortable position. Use pillows or folded blankets to support your arms, back, and legs and to help hold the baby at breast level without strain. Breastfeed on the first side until the baby is finished, then change sides (usually 10 to 20 minutes, and **eight to twelve breastfeedings in 24 hours**). Try not to watch the clock. Watch the baby for signs of needing to nurse and signs that she is full.



**The best prevention for sore nipples is proper latch-on of the baby.**

Position the baby at breast-level with her whole body turned toward you, and her mouth right in front of the nipple. Help the baby to latch-on

by supporting your breast with your hand underneath. Make sure her mouth is WIDE open on the breast, bottom jaw and lower lip flared out under the nipple, nose just touching and chin pressed into the breast. At the end of a feeding, insert a finger into the corner of the baby's mouth to break the suction and remove your nipple from her mouth. For normal nipple tenderness in the first few days, allow breastmilk to dry on the nipples after a feeding (it's antibacterial and helps promote healing). Air-dry nipples for 10 minutes after a feeding; change nursing pads

frequently to avoid constant wetness, and do not use plastic-backed pads. Leaking is a temporary problem and usually subsides in the first weeks.

**How can you tell if your baby is getting enough?**

By the time your baby is five days old, she should have six to eight wet diapers and three to five bowel movements every 24 hours. During the first month, she should breast-feed at least eight times in 24 hours, for at least 10 minutes each feeding. You should hear her swallowing your milk. Your full breasts should be softer after a feeding. She should regain her birth weight by two to three weeks, and continue to gain at least four to seven ounces each week. As your baby grows, she will increase your milk supply by having "frequency days," when she will want to nurse more often. This triggers your body to produce more milk, and soon she will drop back to her usual nursing pattern. Remember that the "**number of starts**" of nursings does more to increase your milk than the "length" of nursings. If you are trying to increase your milk supply, it is better to nurse for 15 minutes every hour, than for 45 minutes every three hours. You'll spend the same amount of time feeding your baby, but she will get more in shorter, more frequent feedings.

**Engorgement is a temporary condition of over-fullness of the breasts.**

This is caused by increased blood flow to the breast (to help fuel the milk-making process) as well as the increased milk supply. You will start to feel that your breasts are becoming heavier and fuller. Engorgement usually peaks in 24-48 hours and it starts to subside over the next 24 hours, though you will continue to feel some extra fullness for about a week.

Cold compresses (applied to the breast between feedings) and frequent nursings help to relieve the discomfort.

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Family Birth Place at  
Park Ridge Hospital

 Unity Health System  
[www.unityhealth.org](http://www.unityhealth.org)



Sometimes the nipple will be hard for the baby to grasp when the breast is firm because of engorgement. Hand-expressing or pumping some milk until the areola softens will help the baby to latch-on more easily.

**To hand express milk**, use the sides of the ends of the fingers. Place the thumb above and the index finger below the nipple, aligned on the edge of the areola. Push the fingers back in toward your chest. Then squeeze the fingers together with a rolling motion (like making finger prints). Do not slide the fingers. Repeat this motion around the areola to reach and remove some milk from all the ducts. Then put the baby to your breast to feed. After the initial engorgement period, your breasts will become softer and somewhat smaller. This does not mean you are losing your milk, rather it shows that your body is adjusting to the routine of providing milk for your baby. There will still be plenty of milk when your baby begins to suckle and your milk ejection (let-down) reflex allows it to flow from your breasts.

**Good nutrition** is important at all times of your life. Processing of foods removes nutrients, so eat a variety of healthy foods in as close to their natural state as possible. Many moms continue to take prenatal vitamins while breastfeeding. There is no need to eat special foods or avoid certain foods unless you notice that they affect your baby by causing fussiness, diaper rash, or distress. Chocolate, pizza, onions, and beans, etc. eaten in moderation usually don't cause any problems.

You don't need to drink milk to make milk! **Drink when you are thirsty**, and have something to drink—water or juice—each time you nurse. You're drinking enough if your urine is not concentrated (dark color and small amount). Avoid heavy caffeine intake - it is passed along to the baby and can make her fussy.

**If you become ill**, continue to breastfeed your baby. She has already been exposed to your germs before you even knew you were sick. Antibodies in your milk will help to keep your baby healthier, even if you are sick. Many medications are safe to take while breastfeeding, but always let your doctor know you are breastfeeding before he prescribes a drug for you. Check with your pediatrician before you take over-the-counter medicine.

**An occasional drink of alcohol**, beer, or wine is generally not considered harmful, but excessive alcohol intake can cause problems. If you smoke, the nicotine and other chemicals pass through your milk, so try to stop smoking or cut-back. And remember, second-hand smoke is harmful to your baby, so don't smoke around her. Using amphetamines, cocaine, heroin, or marijuana is always harmful to your baby when you are nursing. **DO NOT** use them when breastfeeding your baby.

**You can collect and store breast milk** for later use by hand-expressing or pumping. You can store the milk for three to five days in the refrigerator. Frozen breast milk can be stored at 0 degrees for three to six months.

**For questions and help with breastfeeding you can call:**

La Leche League	275-5151
Jordan HealthLink WIC	454-2630
Monroe County WIC	530-4276

The Family Birth Place at Park Ridge Hospital  
Breastfeeding Helpline  
**(585) 368-4033**