

Breastfeeding Basics



Breastfeeding is good for mom & baby!

Breastfeeding is a healthy, natural way to feed infants. Breastmilk is the best food for most infants and breastfeeding can benefit mom, too. Child care can be a great partner to breastfeeding moms and a link to other support in the community. General guidance and tips for breastfeeding are included below. Always talk with a healthcare provider about specific concerns or questions.

0-6 Months

For the first six months of life, doctors recommend that infants are fed only breastmilk, with no other foods or beverages except for any prescribed medicine, vitamins, or mineral supplements. When breastfeeding is not possible, iron-fortified formula is the best choice.

A newborn usually breastfeeds 8-12 times over a 24-hour period. This decreases as the size of baby's stomach grows.

Tip: Feed baby when you see the first **signs of hunger**, such as **rooting** or **sucking** on fingers. Try not to wait until baby is crying.

6-12 Months

From 6 to 12 months of age, doctors recommend continuing to feed infants breastmilk, while beginning to offer solid foods. Early in this stage, breastmilk will still be baby's main source of nutrition. From 8 to 12 months, as baby eats more solid foods, these foods will become the main source of nutrition.

12 Months and Beyond

Ideally, breastfeeding continues through baby's first year, and then for as long as mom and baby would like. In many communities and cultures, it is common for children to continue to breastfeed for several years.



Support for Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is a new skill for mom and baby to learn. Finding support can help. Family and friends can provide support. Baby's doctor and local lactation consultants are other great resources. La Leche League is a non-profit organization with local groups throughout the country that provide support and education. Breastfeeding peer counselors at The National Breastfeeding Helpline (1-800-994-9662) can also answer common questions.



Benefits of Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is Good for Infants:

- Provides the right nutrients for healthy growth and development
- Is easy to digest and can prevent diarrhea
- Protects from infections and delays allergies
- Lowers the risk for several childhood and adult diseases
- Helps baby and mom bond



Breastfeeding is Good for Moms:

- Helps improve mood
- Helps burn calories
- Is less expensive than formula feeding
- Lowers the risk for certain cancers and chronic conditions
- Takes less time and preparation than using infant formula



Did You Know?



Breastmilk is always changing to meet baby's needs.

Colostrum is the first milk that is produced. It helps the newborn fight off diseases and is high in protein.

After the first few weeks, breastmilk becomes higher in **fat** and **vitamins** that older infants need to grow and develop.

Even during a feeding, breastmilk changes. At the beginning of the feeding it looks **watery**. By the end, the milk is **richer** with fat and protein.

Going Back to Work

Going back to work or school is a big transition. As early childhood professionals, we understand the importance of breastfeeding and want to support breastfeeding families.

Our Program Will:

- Make arrangements for mothers to breastfeed and pump in our building
- Properly store and feed infants expressed breastmilk in bottles
- Communicate with families about infants' daily eating patterns and work together to ensure the best schedule of feedings for mom and baby
- Keep learning about breastfeeding by reading and attending trainings

Pumping & Using Expressed Breastmilk:

- Wash hands before and after pumping.
- When possible, pump in a quiet and comfortable space. Federal law requires employers to provide a private space for pumping (not a bathroom) to most employees.
- Label milk with the date and refrigerate or freeze right after pumping. Milk can be stored in the refrigerator (39° F) for 5 days or in the back of the freezer (0° F) for 6 months.
- Use oldest stored milk first.
- Thaw frozen breastmilk overnight in the refrigerator or by running the bottle under warm water. Use within 24 hours.
- Breastmilk does not need to be warmed before baby eats it. Never warm breastmilk in the microwave.
- Label bottles for child care with baby's name, the date it's brought to the program, and any other required information.



Resources Used When Creating This Document

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