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# Breastfeeding Your Baby



**CHILDREN'S & WOMEN'S HEALTH  
CENTRE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

AN AGENCY OF THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH SERVICES AUTHORITY

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## Why breastfeed?

### *Breast is Best because*

- ◆ Your baby will be as healthy as possible
- ◆ Breast milk gives your baby immune benefits and prevents illness
- ◆ You spend time with your baby
- ◆ You save money

### *How long do I breastfeed my baby?*

- ◆ Start giving your baby solid foods at about six months of age
- ◆ Continue to breastfeed for another two years or more. The longer you breastfeed your baby the better it is for the both of you

### *When does my baby need something besides my breast?*

#### **If your baby:**

- ◆ Has a medical problem or your milk supply is low, you may need to use donor milk from the Milk Bank or formula
- ◆ Needs extra milk give it with a cup. Using a bottle may make it difficult for him to breastfeed. Your nurse can help you give milk in a cup

### *During Pregnancy how do I get ready to breastfeed?*

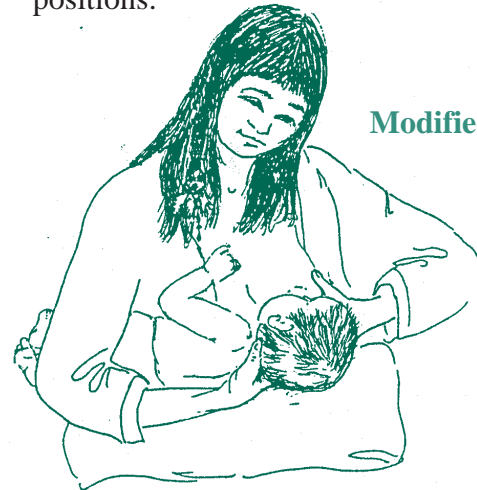
- ◆ Talk to your partner and family about the importance of breastfeeding and how they can help
- ◆ Talk to other breastfeeding mothers
- ◆ Attend a breastfeeding class and La Leche League meetings
- ◆ Read a good book on breastfeeding. For example “Bestfeeding: Getting Breastfeeding Right for You” by Renfrew/Fisher/Arms or “Nighttime Parenting” by Sears
- ◆ Call your health unit and speak to your health nurse if you have concerns about your ability to breastfeed
- ◆ Discuss the benefits of breastfeeding with your doctor

### *What can I expect immediately after my baby is born?*

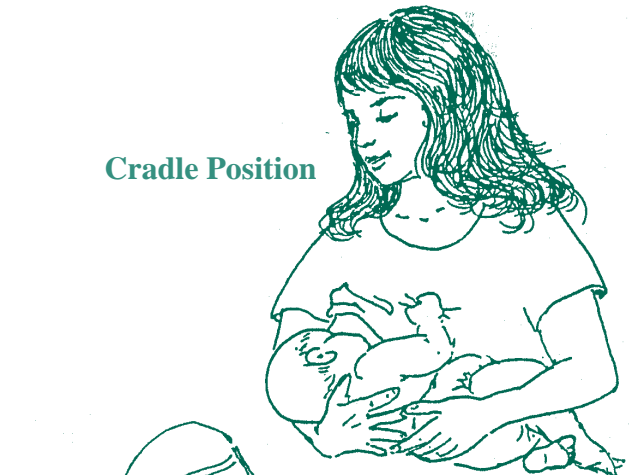
- ◆ Baby is placed on your abdomen on a towel and dried off immediately after birth
- ◆ Baby is moved up onto your chest and assessed while you are cuddling
- ◆ Baby breastfeeds or nuzzles your breast during the first hour of life
- ◆ Baby breastfeeds as long as you and your baby want
- ◆ Baby is placed on your naked chest skin to skin with a heated blanket over both of you
- ◆ Keep your baby with you unless there is a medical emergency

## How do I hold my baby?

The following diagrams show common positions.



**Modified Cradle**



**Cradle Position**



**Football Position**



**Lying down**

## How do I latch my baby?

*These diagrams show a good latch*

- ◆ Support your breast, keep your fingers well back from the areola (brown area)
- ◆ Aim the nipple high in your baby's mouth



- ◆ Touch your baby's upper lip with the breast to help to open her mouth wide
- ◆ Wait until your baby opens her mouth as wide as a yawn



- ◆ Bring your baby close
- ◆ Put your hand on her shoulders, not her head



## What to expect in the first 24 hours after birth:

- ◆ Baby sleeps after breastfeeding soon after birth and sleeps for a few hours. This is a good time for you to sleep too!
- ◆ Keep baby skin-to-skin with a cap on his head and blankets over both of you to keep your baby warm
- ◆ Your baby might be quite sleepy. Let your baby wake himself up for feeds unless he has a medical problem. If he sleeps longer than 4 hours wake him up
- ◆ Baby may feed every 1-3 hours even at night
- ◆ Remember - your baby's tummy is small.
- ◆ Baby gets small amounts of colostrum at each feed. Colostrum is the first milk and is high in calories and helps fight infections
- ◆ Baby tells you he wants to feed by moving his mouth and putting his hands to his mouth
- ◆ Undress your baby if he is too sleepy to feed
- ◆ Feed your baby skin-to-skin
- ◆ Baby wets at least one diaper and passes meconium, a black sticky substance from the bowel
- ◆ Reddish coloured urine on the diaper is normal. This is caused by urate crystals
- ◆ Avoid giving bottles of formula as even one bottle can make breastfeeding harder
- ◆ Supplement only when there is a medical reason.
- ◆ Use your own expressed milk if your baby needs more use donor milk or formula

## What to expect in the second 24 hours after birth:

- ◆ Continue to feed your baby skin-to-skin
- ◆ You will feel tired and this is normal. Limit your visitors so you have time to rest with your baby
- ◆ Let your baby wake herself up to feed unless she has a medical problem. If she sleeps longer than 4 hours wake her up.
- ◆ Baby feeds at least 8 times or more in twenty-four hours
- ◆ Baby may feed every 1-3 hours especially at night
- ◆ Baby wets 2 to 3 diapers
- ◆ Baby has 2 or more dirty diapers in each twenty-four hours
- ◆ Reddish coloured urine in the diaper is normal
- ◆ Baby loses weight and this is normal
- ◆ You may need help with breastfeeding because it takes practice and every baby is different
- ◆ The nurse will watch your baby breastfeed so she can help you see how well your baby is feeding
- ◆ Write down how often your baby feeds, wets and has stools or dirty diapers
- ◆ Do not give your baby anything but your milk unless there is a medical concern - frequent feeding is normal - most babies want to nurse constantly
- ◆ Squeeze some milk from your breast for your baby to taste

## What to expect in the third twenty-four hours after birth and the next few days:

- ◆ You will feel very tired. This is normal
- ◆ Limit visitors so you have time to rest with your baby
- ◆ Let your baby wake himself up to feed. If he sleeps longer than 4 hours wake him up.
- ◆ Baby may feed every 1-3 hours especially at night
- ◆ Undress your baby if he is sleepy
- ◆ Baby wets 3 or more diapers. By day 4-5, your baby has 5 or more very wet diapers
- ◆ Stool colour lightens to yellow or greenish colour and baby has 4 or more dirty diapers in each twenty four hours after day 4
- ◆ Your breasts begin to fill with milk around day 4 or 5 and your baby has more wet and dirty diapers

Before you leave the hospital, you and your partner need to feel comfortable with the plan for feeding your baby. Resources in the community are available to help you once you are home.

## How can I tell my baby is getting enough milk in the first two weeks?

- ◆ Baby has at least 5 wet diapers in 24 hours and urine is pale yellow and odourless
- ◆ Baby has 2-3 stools in 24 hours. The colour goes from brownish to seedy mustard yellow and is the size of a “loonie” or more
- ◆ Baby is feeding at least 8 times in 24 hours
- ◆ Baby is content after most feedings
- ◆ You hear your baby swallowing during feeding
- ◆ Breasts are full before feedings and softer after feedings
- ◆ Baby is gaining weight
- ◆ Frequent wet diapers and loose runny stools are a good sign that your baby is getting enough milk
- ◆ Around 4 to 6 weeks it is common for bowel movements to be less frequent as baby’s bowel matures and handles food more efficiently. As long as the stool is loose and the baby has wet diapers, this is normal

## What do I need to buy to breastfeed?

You probably will not have to buy any special equipment. If your baby is ill or unable to breastfeed rent or buy a good electric breast pump. Ask your nurse to teach you how to hand express your milk. A soft carrier or sling is very helpful to calm your baby - bring one to the hospital.

## What are the common breastfeeding problems?

Effective breastfeeding and a good latch usually prevent problems. If you have one of the problems listed below, keep breastfeeding. If breastfeeding does become too painful, take your baby off your breast, express or pump your milk and give it to your baby. Seek help.

### *Some of the common concerns are:*

#### Sore nipples

- ◆ Almost all women have tender nipples when they start breastfeeding
- ◆ Expressed milk, warm wet facecloth or an emolient (cream) may help
- ◆ If your nipples are not getting better or are cracked or bleeding seek help with positioning and latch from your nurse

#### Engorgement (firm full sore breasts)

- ◆ May occur when your milk comes in around 3-5 days
- ◆ Feed frequently - at least eight or more times in 24 hours
- ◆ If you can’t latch your baby, soften the breasts by using hot compresses and expressing milk by hand or pump to make it easier for the baby to grasp
- ◆ A warm bath or shower may help milk flow

#### Fussing Baby

- ◆ Babies need lots of skin to skin contact, carrying and cuddling
- ◆ Families can help to provide this care
- ◆ Frequent feedings help

#### Leaking

- ◆ Common in the first few weeks and gets better with time
- ◆ If using breast pads, change them frequently
- ◆ Press the heel of your hand against the breast to stop leaking

## Breast lumps

- ◆ Most breast lumps are caused by milk collecting in your milk ducts
- ◆ Usually a warm shower, massage and frequent feeding solve the problem
- ◆ If you have a lump that does not go away, call your health nurse or mothers' support group for further suggestions

## Mastitis

- ◆ A temperature, red breast and flu-like symptoms in a breastfeeding mother may indicate a breast infection
- ◆ Continue to breastfeed your baby and call your doctor for further treatment

## Jaundice

- ◆ It is common for your baby's skin to get yellow after 24 hours of age
- ◆ Breastfeed your baby 8 or more times in 24 hours
- ◆ Give your baby your expressed milk if she is too sleepy to feed
- ◆ Get help to make sure your baby is feeding well
- ◆ Continue to breastfeed if your baby goes "under the lights"

## Too much milk? Not enough milk?

- ◆ Many women have concerns about their milk supply
- ◆ Most babies will nurse on one breast, come off and then be offered the other breast
- ◆ Some babies nurse both breasts at each feeding and others do not
- ◆ If you are concerned about your milk supply or your baby's behaviour, seek help to clarify whether there is a problem

## What do I do if I'm sick?

- ◆ Continue breastfeeding if possible. Your milk has antibodies to help protect your baby from illness
- ◆ Keep your baby close to you to help you rest

## Where do I get more information?

- ◆ Talk to your hospital nurse, community health nurse, doctor or midwife
- ◆ Contact a mother's breastfeeding support group such as the La Leche League
- ◆ Contact BC Women's Lactation Consultant Services  
*Questions:* 604-875-2282  
*Appointments:* 604-875-3135
- ◆ Contact your library
- ◆ Explore the internet. Be sure the information is up-to-date

## When do I call for help?

### *Call for help when your baby:*

- ◆ Is not wetting enough diapers; less than 5 cloth diapers per day after 3-4 days of age
- ◆ Has less than 2-3 bowel movements a day after 3-4 days of age in the first 3 weeks
- ◆ Is not feeding at least 8 times in 24 hours in the first 3 weeks
- ◆ Feeds constantly
- ◆ Is very sleepy and missing feedings
- ◆ Yellow skin color spreads from face to rest of body, or does not go away
- ◆ Has projectile (forceful) vomiting

### *In addition call for help if:*

- ◆ Your breasts are sore and you have flu-like symptoms
- ◆ You continue to have lumps in your breast
- ◆ You continue to have sore nipples

**Call your doctor  
if you think your baby is ill**

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