

Thinking About Breastfeeding?

Breastmilk is best for babies.

Breastmilk is custom-made for your baby and changes as your baby grows. Protections found in breastmilk that are not in formula include:

- Antibodies
- Anti-viruses
- Anti-allergens

Breastmilk provides baby protection from:

- Ear infections
- Diarrhea
- Asthma
- Respiratory infections
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Childhood leukemia

Breastfeeding helps mothers:

- Lose weight after pregnancy by burning up to 600 calories a day
- Lowers risk of diabetes, heart disease, arthritis and even some cancers
- Releases hormones that help calm you

Breastfeeding benefits the whole family

- Breastfeeding costs less than formula since breastfeeding is free. Healthcare costs are also lower since baby has fewer doctors' visits.
- Convenience. Breastmilk is always warm and ready to go. No formula to measure, mix, and warm. This is especially important during emergencies.



Answers to Common Breastfeeding Questions

How long should I breastfeed?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies receive only breastmilk for the first six months of life, and continue to receive breastmilk with other foods until at least one year of age. Breastfeeding can continue as long thereafter as both mother and baby wish.

What can I expect from breastfeeding in the beginning?

Many moms and babies breastfeed without any problems. Others may need a little help. A breastfeeding peer counselor can give you tips on good breastfeeding positions.

Will I make enough milk and how will I know?

Since babies' tummies are tiny, it does not take much to make them full. Supply and demand determine the amount of breastmilk produced. You can tell baby is getting enough by checking the color, texture, and frequency of poops and wet diapers. Other signs baby has received enough milk include:

- Baby is content and satisfied after feedings.
- Your breasts feel softer after feedings.
- Baby is gaining weight.
- Baby breastfeeds 8-12 times every 24 hours, including at night.

Does breastfeeding hurt?

In the beginning, some women experience breast tenderness. Pain usually means baby is not latched well. Talk to your breastfeeding peer counselor if you experience pain.

Does the size of my breasts matter?

No, the size of your breasts does not affect how much milk you make. What matters most is how often you feed your baby breastmilk. The more you breastfeed, the more milk you make.

Can I have my favorite foods and drinks when I breastfeed?

While breastfeeding, you do not have to eat special foods, but a variety will help you feel better and give you more energy. Even if you do not eat the “right” foods every day, you will still make “good” milk. Drink plenty of fluids to satisfy your thirst. Too much caffeine may make baby fussy, so limit coffee, tea, cola, energy drinks and other drinks with caffeine.

Will the baby’s father feel left out if I am the one feeding the baby?

There are lots of things fathers can do: singing or reading to the baby, rocking or holding the baby, or occasionally feeding the baby pumped breastmilk while mom is away.

Can I return to work and continue breastfeeding?

Many women return to work or school and leave pumped breastmilk for their babies. Consult with your breastfeeding peer counselor for tips on transitioning into becoming a working breastfeeding mom.

Can I use birth control while breastfeeding?

Yes. Talk to your healthcare provider to help you choose a birth control method safe for breastfeeding mothers.

What about other medicines?

There are many medicines safe for breastfeeding moms. Call your breastfeeding peer counselor or doctor for specific information. Before taking any medication, be sure to let your healthcare provider know you are breastfeeding.

Can I breastfeed if I smoke?

Smoking can harm your baby whether you breastfeed or bottle feed, even if you do not smoke around your baby. Infants exposed to cigarette smoke have an increased risk of upper respiratory infections and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Even if you smoke, breastfeeding is the best way to feed your baby.

- Try to quit smoking. If you cannot quit, cut down.
- Limit smoking to outdoors and away from your baby.
- Always keep your baby away from secondhand smoke.
- Ask your healthcare provider for more tips on quitting smoking.

Can I drink alcohol?

A breastfeeding mom can occasionally have an alcoholic drink according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Avoid drinking excessively or regularly since this could harm your baby. Because alcohol passes into breastmilk, wait two to three hours before breastfeeding.

Mississippi law protects your right to breastfeed.

Mississippi passed a law in 2006 stating you can breastfeed your baby anywhere you have a right to be. In other words, your baby has the right to breastfeed wherever and whenever he/she is hungry. Employers must allow their employees to pump during any meal or break periods. Daycares must support breastfeeding practices.

WIC moms who breastfeed receive special WIC benefits:

- More foods in the WIC package for breastfeeding women who do not receive formula from WIC
- Breastfeeding advice and support from trained breastfeeding staff
- Access to pumps, books, videos and classes on breastfeeding

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