Mississippi Department of Health

WIC — Women, Infants & Children Program

Thinking About Breastfeeding?

Answers to Common Breastfeeding Questions

How long should I breastfeed? The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies receive only breastmilk for the first 6 months of life and continue to receive breast milk with other foods until at least 1 year of age. Breastfeeding can continue for as long thereafter as both mother and baby wish.

Can I eat my favorite foods if I breastfeed? Yes, eating a variety of foods will help you feel better and give you more energy.

Can I return to work and continue breastfeeding? Many women who return to work or school leave pumped breastmilk for their babies. If you don't want to pump, use formula when you are apart and breastfeed when you are together. Any amount of breastmilk is better than none at all.

Can I use birth control while breastfeeding? Yes, talk to your doctor or health care provider to help you choose a birth control method that's safe for nursing mothers.

Breastmilk is always warm, fresh, and ready to go. There's nothing to heat, sterilize or measure.

What about other medicines? There are many medicines that breastfeeding mothers can take. Call your breastfeeding counselor or doctor for specific information. Before taking any medications, be sure to let your health care provider know that you are nursing.

Won't the baby's father feel left out if I'm 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.

What can I expect from breastfeeding in the beginning? Many moms and babies breastfeed without any problems. Others may need a little help. The breastfeeding counselor can give you tips on good nursing positions. Knowing a few simple tips can prevent problems.

Does breastfeeding hurt? In the beginning some women experience breast tenderness. Pain usually means a baby is not latched well. Talk to your breastfeeding counselor if you have 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 nurse. The more you nurse, the more milk you make.

Can I breastfeed after a Cesarean birth (C-section)? Yes. If you have a C-section, ask a nurse or breastfeeding counselor to help you find comfortable breastfeeding positions.

Breastfeeding releases hormones that help moms feel calm and relaxed.

Can I breastfeed if I smoke? Smoking can harm your baby whether you breastfeed or bottle feed, even if you don't 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 can't quit, cut down.
- Limit smoking to outdoors and away from your baby.
- Always keep your baby away from second hand smoke.
- Ask your healthcare provider for more tips on quitting smoking.

Mississippi law protects your right to breastfeed

Mississippi passed a law in 2006 that gives you the right to breastfeed in public. The law states that 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 is hungry. Employers must allow their workers 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 get formula from WIC
- Breastfeeding advice and support from trained staff and women who have breastfed
- Access to pumps, books, videos and classes on breastfeeding
- Visits or calls from breastfeeding staff
- And much more…

Breastmilk is best for babies.

Your milk contains things that protect your baby from:

- Infections
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Allergies
- Asthma
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Diabetes
- Certain cancers

Most baby formulas are made from cow's milk or soybeans and don't have the protective things found in breastmilk.

Breastfeeding Helps Your Baby Grow Normally

- Your milk changes to meet your baby's needs as he grows.
- Breastmilk promotes brain growth.
- Breastmilk may keep your child from becoming overweight later in life.

Breastfeeding helps mothers:

- Lose weight after pregnancy
- Recover from childbirth
- Decrease their risk of breast and ovarian cancers and osteoporosis (brittle bone disease)
- Enhance the bond between mom and baby

Did you know breastfeeding is good for the whole family?

Because breastfeeding saves money (fewer doctor's visits, no formula expenses), families have more money to buy fresh produce and other healthy foods for the family.

Your milk is always fresh and available, which is especially important in emergencies.

MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

www.HealthyMS.com
1-866-HLthy4U
1-866-458-4948

loving support makes breastfeeding work

MISSISSIPPI WIC Women, Infants and Children

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