



## Tips for Successful Breastfeeding

Breast-feeding is the most natural way to feed your baby; however, the technique does not come naturally to every mother and baby. In fact, it can take many weeks to get started, and a few months to feel completely skilled. Babies are born knowing how to find the nipple and suck; mothers, on the other hand, do not instinctively know how to breast-feed. They have to learn. Here are some tips from the experts-breast-feeding moms.

### Think about buying these items.

- A breast-feeding book. You can easily avoid many problems if you have the right information. There are lots of books to choose from and you can find many in your local library.
- A comfortable chair or bed.
- A clock to keep track of feeding time. The exact time is not as important as a general idea of how long your baby nurses.
- A nursing pillow or firm bed pillows. It is very important to have the baby's mouth level with the areola of your breast. A pillow under the baby will help with positioning.
- Fluids for you. Breast-feeding can make you very thirsty. A big plastic cup with a lid and a straw is a good idea. Remember to never drink hot liquids when holding your baby. Hot drinks are a leading cause of burns in infancy.
- An easy way to keep track of which breast you ended with, like a safety pin on your bra or a ring you move from hand to hand.
- A breast pump. Many find a breast pump to be extremely helpful. Pumping and freezing breast milk allows you to feed your baby breast milk when you need to leave your baby. There are many available at stores that cater to infants. You may also want to contact your local breast-feeding support group. They may be able to give you more information.

### Breast feeding tips

- Babies need to eat often - every 90 minutes to two hours. Feed your baby when she begins to show signs of hunger, such as rooting or sucking on her lips, fingers or fist. Try to feed her before she gets too upset. Feeding your baby often will not spoil her. It will help you learn to become more aware of your baby's needs.
- Do not limit feeding times. Babies need different amounts of food at different times of the day, just as grown people do.
- Hold your baby's tummy to your tummy, baby's chin to your breast. You can do this sitting or lying down. Hold your breast in a "C-hold," with your thumb on top and fingers underneath. Tickle your baby's lips with your nipple until her mouth opens

- wide. Quickly bring her onto the breast. Allow the tip of your baby's nose and chin to touch the breast.
- Make sure your baby's mouth covers your entire nipple and much of the darker part around the nipple. Your baby's upper and lower lips should be rolled out. If the lips are not rolled out, break the suction by slipping your finger between the baby's gums and your breast. Then latch the baby on again.
- Offer your baby both breasts at each feeding. Your baby will tell you when she is finished by "falling off" the breast.
- Relax! Take your time. The more you nurse your baby, the more milk you will have. Do not give your baby formula or water. If you do, you will make less milk. If you think you do not have enough milk, nurse more often and nurse longer.
- A breastfed baby usually doesn't need water. However, you may give her water if the weather is hot and your home is not air-conditioned. Don't add sugar or honey to the water. Don't give flavored drinks or soda to your baby. Don't give fruit juice to a newborn baby.
- If you are out with your baby, you can still breastfeed. You may want to take along a receiving blanket or shawl with which to cover up.
- If you have to be away from your baby, you can still give her breast milk. You can withdraw or "express" breast milk by hand or with a breast pump into a sterile container. Then someone else can give it to her in a bottle.
- It is important for you to eat well and drink enough water.
- You should avoid drugs while breastfeeding. You should only take medication if your doctor says it is OK to take while you are breastfeeding.

*(Adapted from MCHB, Healthy Start Grow Smart, Your Newborn:  
[www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/earlychildhood/healthystart](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/earlychildhood/healthystart); Healthy Steps)*