Breastfeeding Basics

Getting Started with Breastfeeding Basics

Begin breastfeeding as soon after your delivery as possible.
Babies are the most alert during the first hour after birth.The earlier breastfeeding begins the sooner digestive activity begins.The sooner the baby receives colostrum, the earlier mother's milk will come in.

Watch for signs that your baby needs to breastfeed.
Newborn babies do not cry to show they need to nurse; this comes as babies get older. Look for these signs that your baby is hungry: waking from sleep, moving the head around as if he/she is looking for breast, baby opening mouth or sucking on hands, lips or tongue.

Breastfeed your newborn frequently.
Newborns need to eat at minimum 8-12 times in 24 hours. Frequent feeding increases milk supply, promotes complete emptying of breast, promotes better weight gain in infant and reduces engorgement. Your baby will space feedings more as he/she gets older.

Offer both breasts at each feeding.
This increases milk supply, promotes better weight gain in the infant and reduces engorgement.

Try to burp your baby when you switch from one breast to the other.
Breastfed babies do not swallow as much air as bottle-fed babies and may not burp at every feeding.

A Good Latch

Start with your baby turned toward your body, close to your nipple. Baby should have a wide mouth to latch. During latch-on, the baby's mouth forms a tight seal around the nipple and most of the areola (the darker skin around the nipple). Signs that your baby has a good latch include:

- The top and bottom lips are wide open.
- The lips are turned outward against the breast.
- The chin is touching the breast, and the nose is close to the breast.
- The tongue comes out over the lower lip during latch and stays below the areola during nursing.

Your nipple might look longer, but should be the same shape at the beginning and end of nursing. A feeling of gentle tugging is common. If painful, place your finger in the corner of baby's mouth, breaking the seal, and try again.

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