Breastfeeding: Tips for Success

UTAH | WOMEN, INFANTS & CHILDREN

Early Breast Milk Changes

Your breasts may feel more full around days 2–5 as colostrum changes to milk that comes in greater volume. The best way to prevent your breasts from becoming too full or engorged is to keep your baby skin to skin and nurse often, even every hour, to completely empty your breasts. Allowing your baby to completely empty your breasts during breastfeeding will prevent engorgement and increase your milk production.

To help prevent engorgement:

- Breastfeed often and every time your baby shows early signs of hunger. This will be frequently and at least 8–12 times in 24 hours. Don't skip feedings.
- A newborn's stomach is very small. They need to eat often during the day and night. Wake your baby if necessary.
- Allow baby to finish the first breast before offering the other breast. Switch sides when baby releases the nipple or falls asleep.
- Make sure baby is latched on, positioned well and transferring milk. If you're not sure, ask a WIC staff or WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor for help.

- Do not use pacifiers, bottles, or supplements of water or formula. If you think your baby is not getting enough of your breast milk, contact your WIC clinic and ask to speak to a WIC Lactation Educator or Peer Counselor.

- Holding your baby skin to skin will comfort your baby and make breastfeeding better for both of you.

Comfort measures:

- Gently massage your breasts before and during nursing sessions.
- At the beginning of a feeding, hand express or pump just enough milk to soften the breast so he can latch easily.
- Before feeding, apply warm, wet towels to your breasts or massage them in a hot shower.
- Use cold packs (ice packs over a layer of cloth) between feedings to reduce swelling.

Hand expression:

Hand expression can be used to encourage baby to latch on, relieve engorgement, or provide milk for your baby. Some moms prefer hand expression over using a pump.

- Cup your breast with your fingers underneath and your thumb on top just outside or behind the areola (dark part of nipple).
- While supporting the breast, bring the breast back towards the chest wall and compress and squeeze the breast to empty the ducts and express milk. This will bring more milk than simply squeezing the breast forward.
- Holding the breast in the same manner, rotate your hand position around in either direction to express milk in different areas of the breast. Repeat on other breast.
- Hand expression and massage can be done in between or after using a pump.

Sleepy Baby

Most babies are sleepy for the first couple of weeks after they are born. Try these tips to help your newborn stay alert during feedings.

- Hold baby skin to skin
- Change baby's diaper
- Massage baby gently
- Burp baby and offer the other breast
- Talk or sing to baby
- Use breast compressions (squeeze breast gently) when sucking begins to slow down

Offer your breast often in between sleepy times; your baby's tummy is small and it is common to have short, but frequent feedings. Wake your baby if he sleeps longer than 3 hours (4 hours at night). If sleepiness continues beyond the first 2 weeks, call your health care provider.

Sore Nipples

In the early weeks of breastfeeding, your nipples may feel tender or even sore. Some moms complain of soreness as baby latches on. If baby is positioned well, discomfort should only last a few seconds. If soreness continues, break the suction with your finger, remove baby from breast and try again.

Nipple soreness may be a sign that the baby is not latched well and is not transferring milk easily. It is best early on, to talk to a Peer Counselor; she can share how she managed nipple tenderness. Soreness that goes on beyond a couple of weeks or is extremely painful is not normal.

Comfort measures:

Try different nursing positions to see what feels best to you and your baby. Make sure your baby's mouth is always wide coming on to the breast and is back behind the areola (dark part of nipple) and is not just on the end of the nipple.

- Nurse on the side that is least sore first. If both breasts are sore, use warm compresses and gentle massage to start flow of milk
- Hold baby close and skin to skin often
- Express a little milk onto nipples after nursing or use pure lanolin
- Breastfeed more often and for shorter periods of time
- Call WIC if you are not feeling relief!

Do I Have Enough Milk?

You might wonder if you have enough milk for your baby. Be assured that your body will respond to the baby nursing and sucking to produce the right amount. What a great way to respond to your baby!

Growth spurts:

Babies go through growth spurts around 2–3 weeks, 4–6 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months of age. If your baby seems hungrier around these ages, know that this is normal. Respond to your baby's needs by breastfeeding more frequently for a couple of days. This signals your body to make more milk for your baby's growth. Supplementing with infant formula will prevent this signal from occurring and can lower your milk production.

Baby is getting enough to eat checklist:

- Baby breastfeeds at every sign of early hunger
- Baby is actively sucking and swallowing during feedings
- Baby has 6 or more wet diapers and 3–4 or more messy diapers a day by day 5

- Baby is back to birth weight by 10–14 days
- Baby continues to gain about ¾ ounce per day

Hindmilk or foremilk:

Foremilk is sometimes referred to as the first milk your baby gets at the start of the breastfeeding session, while hindmilk is the fat rich milk toward the end of the session. Over time, breast milk changes throughout the feeding. Try fully feeding on one breast before switching to the other so that your baby gets the "hind" milk, which is higher in fat and other nutrients. Some babies are content after eating from just one side, then should start on the other side the next feeding.

Nursing on the go:

Try using a baby sling and a cover up to nurse when you are out shopping or want more privacy to nurse. Nursing when your baby is hungry will satisfy him and keep up your milk production. This will help you have enough milk as he grows!

Top Breastfeeding Tips

- **Keep your baby close to you.** Holding your baby skin to skin will decrease his crying. Responding to his needs will help him

learn that he can rely on you. Have your baby sleep in your room, so that you can breastfeed more easily at night.

- **Learn your baby's early hunger signs.** Your baby will show you he's hungry by turning his head toward you or by moving his head back and forth and looking and feeling for the breast with his mouth and lips. Licking lips, tongue movement, and sucking hands are also signs. Crying is a late sign of hunger and can make it harder for your baby to latch. Babies have small tummies so they need to eat every couple of hours; breastfeed whenever your baby shows early hunger signs or needs comfort.
- **Watch your baby.** Your baby should be actively sucking and swallowing and then after a while he will slow his pace, pause and then stop; that will let you know he is getting full. When baby comes off the breast, burp him and try offering the other breast. Feedings may be 15–20 minutes or longer per breast.
- **Expect your breast milk to change as your baby grows.** After a few weeks after birth, your breasts will feel less full as your body adjusts to producing only the amount of milk your baby needs. It is normal to feel like your breasts are not as full during this adjustment. To know your baby is getting enough to eat and your body is producing enough milk, see page 5 "Baby is getting enough to eat checklist."

- **Trust your body.** Have confidence in yourself and in your body's ability to make milk. Your breasts will respond to your baby's needs. Mothers who breastfeed early and often will make enough milk for their baby. Using formula will decrease your milk production. Call your Peer Counselor and ask her how she breastfed her baby.

- **Know who to call.** Fill in your Peer Counselor's information:

  _____

  _____ .

These early days are full of new experiences for you and your baby. If you need help, call a Peer Counselor or the WIC clinic if you are thinking about giving your baby a bottle.

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Tips for Success

For additional brochures on breastfeeding ask your WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor for:

- Breastfeeding: The Best Start
- Breastfeeding: Returning to Work or School

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH

Division of Family Health and Preparedness
WIC Program
P.O. Box 141013
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-1013
http://health.utah.gov/wic/

April 2013