



Breastfeeding—Is Baby Getting Enough?

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Is Baby Getting Enough?

Knowing when to feed

Some mothers wait until their baby cries before feeding. The truth is waiting until your baby cries to feed is often too late. A baby can become really upset and hard to handle once the crying starts.

Watch for baby's feeding cues

- rapid eye movements under the eyelids
- sucking movements of the mouth and tongue
- hand to mouth movements
- body movements and small sounds

A fussy baby can disrupt a mother's confidence in her ability to breastfeed. However, a mom shouldn't think that fussiness is due to lack of breast milk. Babies fuss and cry for many reasons:

- wet diapers
- need for a nap
- to burp
- to be held
- too cold
- too warm
- wanting to be loved and rocked
- and a lot of other things.



*Ask for pamphlet "Hush Little Baby" published by the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension for coping with crying babies.

If you think that baby is not getting enough milk, check the following points.

- Nursing techniques - Is baby latching on and suckling properly? It is important to learn how to position baby at the breast.
- Not nursing **often** enough—How many times are you nursing your baby? Are you skipping night feedings?
- Not nursing **long** enough—Feedings may not be long enough for your baby. Don't watch the clock -watch your baby.
- Poor "let-down" reflex—Do you need a hot shower, music or massaging to help you "let-down"? Seek advice from a lactation counselor, as everyone's situation may be different.
- Tobacco use can limit milk supply. Alcohol or certain types of medications also affect milk production.

Don't Give Up!

There are times that you may be discouraged and want to quit breastfeeding. If you don't think your baby is getting enough milk, you may need to adjust the way you breastfeed or breastfeed more often to get a good supply of milk. For example, you may have to wake your newborn for nighttime feeding. Before you stop breastfeeding, talk with supportive friends, or a lactation counselor—let them help you.

Some "Don'ts"

- Do not limit the number of feedings—your baby should be fed often. Some women think if they decrease the number of feedings their breasts will "fill." It just does not work this way. In fact, the more often the baby nurses the more milk the mother will make.
- Do not supplement with water or formula. This causes the breasts to make less milk. Breast milk provides enough water to take care of the baby's normal needs. More frequent feedings will satisfy thirst during the very hot summer.
- Ask for help from supportive friends or relatives when you feel pressure to give bottles or to limit breastfeeding.



Signs That Baby is Getting Enough Milk During the Early Weeks

- Baby nurses about every 2 hours (10–12 times a day) and is active, alert, yet restful in between feedings. Nursing at least 10 times a day helps your breast to make enough milk.
- After the first week, baby has 6–8 soaking wet diapers per 24 hours.
- Baby has about 1–6 pasty mustard-colored bowel movements per 24 hours.
- There are swallowing sounds when nursing. Listen for “gulping”. Look for slow, steady jaw movement.
- In the first weeks, your breasts may feel softer and lighter at the end of a feeding. Let baby drain the first breast before being placed at the second.
- Baby should feed at night; do not skip night feedings. These are critical.
- A newborn baby may lose up to several ounces of weight after birth. He will regain his birth weight by about 2 weeks. Average weight gain is about 4 to 7 ounces per week during the early weeks.
- Baby should look healthy—skin color and tone are good.

Current Recommendations for Feeding

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies should be fed entirely on breast milk for the first 4-6 months. Solids then can be introduced along with breast milk until your baby is one year old. How long you should breastfeed depends on you and your baby. Many women continue to breastfeed their babies beyond the first year. Some mothers choose to breastfeed for shorter times. Any amount of breast feeding is terrific for you and your baby. But don't stop just because you have to go back to work or school. Some women continue to pump milk and store it to feed the baby later after they return to work. You can check with a lactation counselor and find out more about pumping milk.

Call the Breastfeeding Support Hotline at the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (702) 257-5583.

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