

## WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE FIRST MONTH BREASTFEEDING



The early weeks of breastfeeding are a steep learning curve and if you find it overwhelming from time to time you're not alone. While feeding around the clock is usual and helps you build your milk supply, it can be tiring. So be patient, look after yourself, and reach out to your breastfeeding peer counselor/WIC for support.

### How often can I expect to feed?

Your newborn has a small stomach that grows rapidly, from the size of an apricot at week one to the size of a large hen's egg at two weeks, to perfectly accommodate your growing milk supply. Allowing your baby to take what she needs, when she needs it, will help her regain her birth weight and continue growing.

Feeding 8-12 times in a 24-hour period is recommended. You can expect to feed every two to three hours during the day. At night you might get longer gaps, like three to four hours. Each day is different and so is every baby. Some babies are speedy feeders and are full in 15 minutes, whereas others can feed for up to an hour.

At each feed, allow your baby to take as much milk as she wants from one breast, then offer the other, which she may or may not want. When she's full, she'll detach naturally and seem relaxed and content – so much so that she might fall asleep. Next time offer the opposite breast first.

How much milk your baby needs will change as baby grows, and your body will adjust to those changes. If your baby has a growth spurt, your baby might want to nurse more often or for longer periods of time. Your body will adjust to that, too.

The important thing is to nurse as long and as often as your baby wants and to let your baby eat until full.

## Why does my baby want to feed all the time?

This first month is usually the most demanding when it comes to breastfeeding. But just because your baby appears constantly hungry and is feeding often – perhaps every 45 minutes – don't assume that you don't have enough milk.

Babies need to feed often to make and build your milk supply during this first month. This lays the foundations of a good milk supply for the future too.

## Does my baby need a breastfeeding schedule?

Your baby is too young for a routine, so forget following a breastfeeding schedule – let her guide you instead.

- Relax! Find a place where you can breastfeed comfortably.
- Try out different positions for breastfeeding.
- Learn your baby's hunger cues.
- Reach out for help when you hit a bump in the road, like sore nipples, plugged ducts, supply concerns, and more. Your local WIC staff can help.
- Avoid using pacifiers or other artificial nipples until breastfeeding is going well, which is usually after the first month.

As a new mom, you may be wondering how often and how much to feed your baby., Your baby will give you signs to let you know when they are hungry and full.

## SIGNS YOUR BABY IS HUNGRY

Watch for these signs that your baby is hungry, and then feed baby right away:

- Fists moving to mouth.
- Head turning to look for the breast.
- Becoming more alert and active.
- Sucking on hands or lip smacking.
- Opening and closing mouth.

Many moms think crying is the only sign that their baby is hungry. But it's actually a sign of distress. Hungry babies will show signs of hunger before they begin to cry. Watching for and responding early to your baby's hunger signs may help prevent them from crying. Once baby is crying, it can be harder to latch.



## SIGNS YOUR BABY IS FULL

It's important to let your baby nurse until they're full. Some signs that babies are done eating are:

- Baby releases or "falls off" your breast.
- Baby turns away from your nipple.
- Baby relaxes their body and opens their fists.

If your baby finishes eating on one breast and seems full, try burping your baby and changing their diaper (if needed), then offer the other breast. If your baby doesn't seem interested or doesn't want to latch, they may not be hungry anymore. Some babies may eat from both sides at every feeding, while others may only eat from one side.