



A GUIDE TO

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding

A gift that lasts a lifetime!

- Breastmilk is all your baby needs for the first six months. After six months, begin offering your baby solid foods in addition to breastmilk.
- Breastfed babies are healthy babies. Formula fed babies have more ear infections, diarrhea, and allergies. Formula fed babies are more likely to become overweight, obese, or develop diabetes.



- Breastmilk is always clean, safe, and at the right temperature.
- Breastfeeding is good for you! It helps you recover faster from labor and delivery, and it may help you lose pregnancy weight faster.
- Moms who breastfeed are less likely to develop diabetes, certain types of cancer, and heart disease.
- Breastfeeding is convenient; it is easy to breastfeed away from home! No bottles to carry and clean or formula to mix.
- Breastfeeding is better for the environment. It does not need packaging, bottles, nipples, and soap for washing these items.

Pediatricians recommend that babies should be breastfed for at least the first 12 months of life or longer as mother and baby wish.



- Getting Off to a Great Start
- Finding Comfortable Positions
- Tips for a Good Latch
- Support of Family, Friends, and Dad Makes a Difference
- Breastfeeding Questions & Answers

Getting Off to a Great Start

Babies are born to breastfeed.

Let your baby follow his natural instincts. He can breastfeed with just a little help from you.

- Tell your doctor and nurses in the hospital that you plan to breastfeed and not to give any bottles or pacifiers to your baby.
- Breastfeed your baby as soon as possible after delivery. Tell your doctor and nurses that you want to hold your baby skin-to-skin during the first hour or two after birth.
- Ask the hospital if they have an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) who can give you helpful advice.

*It is important
to me to keep
breastfeeding because
my baby is healthier,
it's easy to do,
and it's cheap.*

—WIC Mom

- Breastfeeding takes practice—just like learning a new dance. It gets easier as your baby grows.
- Try some of the positions on the next pages. Relax while you and your baby get used to breastfeeding.
- Call your WIC office if you need help or have questions about breastfeeding.



Finding Comfortable Positions



Laid Back

The best way to help your baby use his natural instincts.

- Lean back comfortably; use pillows for support if you want.
- Have your baby skin-to-skin, or in light clothing (not wrapped).
- Lay baby on your chest; let him move towards your breasts. Relax and enjoy.
- Your body supports your baby's body; use pillows or blankets to help.



Cross Cradle

Good for smaller babies.

- Support your baby's body and neck.
- Put your baby across your body tummy-to-tummy with you.
- Wrap her legs around your side.
- Baby breastfeeds on the breast opposite your supporting arm.



Clutch or Football Hold

Good for women with large breasts.

- Place one or more pillows at your side to support your arm.
- Put your baby on the pillow with his legs tucked under your arm.
- Slide your arm under your baby's back and support his neck with your hand.
- Hold baby with arm on the same side as the breast being offered.



Lying Down

Most comfortable for women who have had a difficult delivery or for night feeds.

- Use pillows for comfort as needed.
- Start with his nose in front of your nipple, just like the other positions.
- Support your baby with your arm, a pillow, or a rolled-up blanket.



Cradle Hold

Most common position for older babies.

- Place a pillow in your lap.
- Put your baby on his side, tummy-to-tummy with you.
- Rest his head on your arm starting off with his nose in front of your nipple.
- Tuck his lower arm under your breast.

Tips for a Good Latch



Latch is the way a baby attaches to the breast. A good latch is important to:

- Make sure baby gets enough milk
- Avoid sore nipples
- Help your breasts make more milk

Many moms and babies may need a little help and reassurance in the beginning. Remember, it's okay to ask for help. Here are some tips:

- Find a comfortable position with lots of support. Snuggle your baby in close to you.
- Line up baby's nose with your nipple. Baby's head can then tilt back, letting his mouth reach up and over your nipple. A wide open mouth helps baby to get more of the dark skin around your nipple (areola) in his mouth.
- Watch to see that baby's chin and lower lip touch the breast first. Once on the breast, baby's chin will be pushed in against the breast.



You can tell your baby is latched on well and getting milk if:

- Both of his lips are curled out wide, not tucked in.
- Cheeks are rounded.
- You can hear or see baby swallowing.
- You do not feel pain while breastfeeding.

My baby would not latch on. The WIC people helped me try different positions, I never gave up. Thanks WIC!

— WIC Mom

Support

of Family, Friends, and Dad Makes a Difference



- Encourage mom with words of support; things will get easier.
- Limit visitors and visiting times, especially at the hospital when mom and baby are learning to breastfeed.
- Hold baby skin-to-skin.
- Get to know normal baby behavior, especially for crying and sleeping. Ask WIC staff for help.

- Speak up for mom's wishes.
- Take mom to get breastfeeding help, if she wants it.
- Ask grandma to pick the kids up from school.
- Help with cooking, cleaning, laundry, and chores.
- Ask a friend to bring over a meal.



Babies bond
through love,
care, and contact
with dad.





Q&A

Breastfeeding Questions & Answers

Will I have milk as soon as my baby is born?

Yes. Although your breasts may feel soft, you are already making colostrum, your first milk.

This special first milk is thick and yellow. It helps your baby learn to suck and swallow and is all she needs for now.

Even though you may only have small amounts of this first milk, colostrum has protein, vitamins, and lots of antibodies that protect your baby from getting sick.

How often should I feed my baby?

- Feed your baby when she is hungry.
- Breastfeed your newborn baby 10 or more times in a 24-hour period.
- If your baby is sleeping a lot, you may need to wake her up for some feedings.
- Let your baby decide when she is ready to eat and when to end the feeding.

Will I have enough milk to feed my baby?

- Yes. The more you breastfeed your baby, the more milk you make. Using formula, even a small amount, will reduce the amount of milk you make.
- Newborn babies have small stomachs, about the size of their fist, so they need to breastfeed often.
- After a few days, you will start to make larger amounts of milk.
- If you choose to use a pacifier, delay use until at least one month of age to ensure breastfeeding is going well.
- After the first few days, your breasts will feel full and firm. Then after a few weeks, your breasts will start to feel softer and not as full. This is normal; your milk supply is adjusting to your baby's needs. Your milk has NOT gone away.

What are growth spurts?

- Growth spurts are short periods of time when your baby is growing at a faster rate, has a bigger appetite, and may be fussier.

- 
- Growth spurts often happen around 7 to 10 days, 2 to 3 weeks, 6 weeks, and 3 months.
 - You can expect your baby to want to be close to you and breastfeed more often during these times. Be confident, your body knows what to do and will make more milk.

How do I know that my baby is getting enough milk?

- You can tell your baby is getting enough milk by her weight gain and the number of diapers she uses.
 - Most babies lose a few ounces in the first few days. After day 4, your baby should be gaining weight, getting back to her birth weight by 10 to 14 days of age.
 - The chart on the next page shows the number of diapers your baby should use in the first week.
 - It's okay if your baby uses **more** diapers than shown, but if your baby uses **less**, call your doctor.
 - At 6 to 8 weeks, she may not have as many dirty diapers; this is normal. She will still have at least 5 wet diapers per day.
- 

How many diapers does your baby use?

Baby's Age	Wet Diapers	Dirty Diapers
1 Day old		
2 Days old		
3 Days old		
4 Days old		
5 Days old		
6 Days old		
7 Days old		

The first week your baby's stools will change:



Days 1-2

Black, thick, and sticky



Days 3-4

Greenish to yellow and less thick



By Day 5

Mustard or yellow, seedy and watery

Your baby will have more and more wet diapers.

How will I know when my baby is hungry?

Look for these early signs of hunger before your baby starts to cry:

- Keeps her hands near her mouth
- Bends her arms and legs
- Makes sucking noises
- Puckers her lips

Don't wait until your baby starts to cry. A crying baby is hard to feed.



How will I know when my baby is full?

Let your baby decide when he is full.
Look for these signs:

- Sucking slows down or stops
- Arms and hands relax
- Baby lets go of the breast
- Baby falls asleep

I knew my baby was full when she would turn her head away and stop eating and fall asleep.
—WIC mom



What is engorgement?

Engorgement is when your breasts become swollen and painful, maybe because you have missed or delayed feedings. Your breasts feel “hard as rocks” and your baby may not be able to latch very well. Call your WIC Lactation Consultant or peer counselor for advice and guidance.

Here are some quick tips for some relief:

- Before breastfeeding, take a warm shower or apply warm compresses.
- Hand express or pump a small amount of breastmilk to soften breasts for an easier latch.
- If your breasts are too hard to latch your baby, call your WIC lactation consultant and ask about reverse pressure softening.
- After feeding, put ice packs on your breasts for 20 minutes to help reduce swelling. You can use bags of frozen peas.
- Don't offer formula supplements, skip or stop breastfeeding. This will only make the engorgement worse.



The key to preventing swollen breasts is to breastfeed often, 10 or more times in 24 hours.



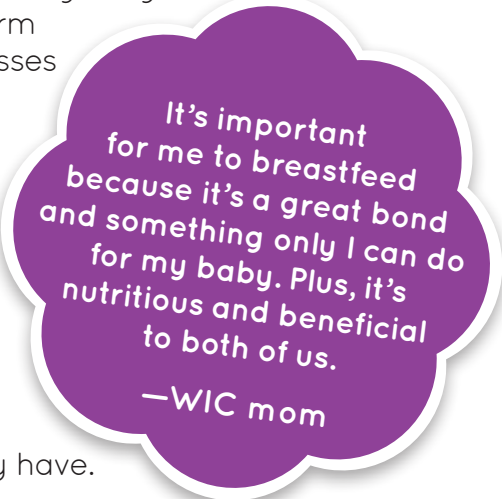
How can I breastfeed in public?

- Tuck a corner of the receiving blanket under your bra strap and then cover the baby.
- Try a baby sling. When used correctly, it lets your baby be carried and breastfed while you are out shopping or walking.
- Layer a loose-fitting shirt over a tank top. This lets you pull up your top and breastfeed the baby, while using the outer shirt to cover you and the baby. No extra stuff to bring!
- Practice at home with your baby before going out so you are comfortable.
- California law says it is your right to breastfeed in public.

Will I have to watch what I eat and drink when I breastfeed?

- You do not have to eat special foods while breastfeeding. It's best to try to eat a variety of healthy foods. However, you will still make "good" milk even if you do not eat the "right" foods every day.
- WIC provides breastfeeding moms a food package of greater value than moms who do not breastfeed. Ask your WIC staff about what's included.
- Drink enough fluids to satisfy your thirst. Drinking a lot of fluids will not make more breastmilk.
- Limit coffee, tea, cola, energy drinks, and other drinks with caffeine. Too much caffeine may make your baby fussy.
- According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, a breastfeeding mom can occasionally have an alcoholic drink. You should not drink excessively or regularly because this could harm your baby. Alcohol passes into breastmilk; so if you have an alcoholic drink, wait 2 to 3 hours before breastfeeding.

Talk to your WIC counselor about taking medications, smoking, drinking alcohol, or any other concerns you may have.



It's important for me to breastfeed because it's a great bond and something only I can do for my baby. Plus, it's nutritious and beneficial to both of us.

—WIC mom



Families Grow Healthy with WIC!

WIC is a great place to
go for breastfeeding support
and education.



**California Department of Public Health,
California WIC Program**

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

1-800-852-5770

Rev 01/21

