

# Nutrition for Adults' LIFE

## Breastfeeding



**Breastfeeding is the ideal way to feed babies. It also helps keep your baby from getting sick as often. Breastfeeding is a special time for you and your baby to get to know one another. It is also convenient, inexpensive and good for your health.**

### ➤ HOW OFTEN SHOULD I FEED MY BABY?

You should nurse whenever your baby shows signs of hunger like increased alertness or activity, mouthing or rooting. Crying is a late sign of hunger. Your first feeding may be as early as 20-30 minutes after birth. For the first few days, baby may eat every 1 to 3 hours which is about 8-12 times every 24 hours. Newborns need to eat often because they have small stomachs and breast milk is easy to digest. As your baby gets older, the feedings may be about every 3-4 to four hours and may last about 10-20 minutes. These are only estimates and your baby may not fit in this range.

### BENEFITS FOR MOM:

- *Your body gets in shape more quickly.*
- *Breastfeeding may help you lose some of the weight you've gained while pregnant.*
- *Breastmilk saves money and time.*
- *Breastfeeding has been found to reduce the risk of some diseases such as cancer and diabetes*

### ➤ HOW WILL I KNOW IF MY BABY IS GETTING ENOUGH MILK?

When your baby is three to four days old, you should see at least 6 wet diapers and 2-4 loose yellow stools each day. Urine should be pale yellow, not deep yellow or orange. You should feel baby sucking and hear baby swallowing while feeding. Baby should look alert and healthy when awake.

## NUTRITION DURING BREASTFEEDING

Mothers who are breastfeeding should continue to eat a healthy diet by following MyPyramid (see back page). Continue to eat high-fiber whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and dairy, such as low fat milk and yogurt. It is also important to drink enough fluids while breastfeeding. Try sipping on water, milk or juice while breastfeeding, as well as drinking water whenever you are thirsty.

By Beth H. Olson, Ph.D., MSU Extension Nutrition Specialist, Family and Consumer Sciences 1/06

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# Common Challenges with Breastfeeding

## *Sore Nipples*

You should not feel pain when your baby is feeding. If you do, try changing your baby's position on your breast. Your baby should be facing right at your breast and nipple. If your nipples crack or bleed, seek help from a lactation consultant. It can help to rinse your nipples in water and expose them to air before nursing.

## *Engorgement*

Engorgement is when your breasts feel hot, very hard and swollen. This may be due to your breasts being full of milk, and happens more when you first start breastfeeding. The best way to help this is to feed your baby often and make sure your baby is nursing correctly. Use ice packs between feedings to reduce swelling. Take a warm shower to get milk flowing prior to feeding. If you are away from your baby during regular feedings, use a breast pump or hand express.

## *Sickness*

For most illnesses, you will still be able to nurse. Mom starts producing antibodies within one hour of getting sick and passes the antibodies to her baby. Ask your doctor if you are sick and before taking any medications.

## HOW LONG SHOULD YOU BREASTFEED?

The American Academy of Pediatrics says that breastmilk is all the nutrition your baby needs for the first six months. Near six months, your baby may be ready for solids. Your baby may be ready when she can sit with support, control her head and upper body, and move her head forward to eat and away when she's full. It is recommended that you continue breastfeeding for at least 12 months, then as long after as you and your baby want. If you stop breastfeeding before 12 months of age, use iron-fortified formula. Babies cannot digest cow's milk until one year of age.

## IF YOU NEED HELP

If you have any questions, ask the nurses or lactation consultant at the hospital. After leaving the hospital, you may be able to call back for help, or call a private lactation consultant (see below). Other people who can help are your baby's doctor or nurse, your doctor, or a WIC nutritionist.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### **USDA Food Pyramid:**

[www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)

### **Lactation consultants: La Leche League**

[www.lalecheleague.org](http://www.lalecheleague.org) or the phone book

### **The National Women's Health Information Center**

[www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding](http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding)

