

## Breastfeeding Frequently Asked Questions

### When do I first make milk?

You make colostrum from around 24 weeks of pregnancy, although you may not see any evidence of this until your baby is born. Colostrum is ready for you to give to your baby at the birth in very small amounts.

### Why have my nipples gone dark?

Your nipples become darker during pregnancy as a 'target' for the baby as soon as he/she is born so feeding can start early.

### I have bumps on my nipples what are they for?

These are little glands that secrete an oily substance to protect your nipples. The oil also gives you an individual smell for your baby to recognise you as his/ her mother.

### My baby is feeding very frequently, is that ok?

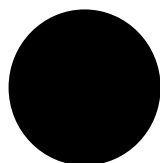
A new baby will feed very frequently as its tummy is very small. 10 to 12 times in 24 hours is normal. They can also have a period of time during the 24 hours when they 'cluster feed'. You may not be sure where one feed ends and another begins! As your baby grows he or she will start to feed less often. As you start to get out and about you will find your baby goes longer between feeds.

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

You can tell if your baby is getting enough milk by the following:

1. Your baby is content after most feeds; all babies have periods when they are unsettled.
2. Your baby is healthy and gaining weight.
3. Your breasts and nipples are not sore.
4. Your baby has at least 6 wet nappies a day;
5. Newborn babies, after the first 2 or 3 days have at least 2 yellow stools in 24 hours. (See colour picture below.)

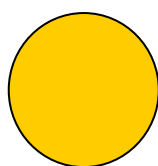
Day 1



day 2-3



Day 4 onwards



### My nipples are still sore what can I do?

In the first few days women frequently have tender nipples at the beginning of a feed. If the pain lasts throughout the feed this may be a sign that the baby is not attached correctly to the breast. Please contact your midwife, Health Visitor or one of the infant feeding team for help.

For further information on your baby attaching well at the breast see

[http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Baby\\_Friendly/Leaflets/otbs\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Baby_Friendly/Leaflets/otbs_leaflet.pdf)

### My baby is reluctant to feed?

Some babies are very sleepy at birth and in fact in the first 1 to 2 days. If your baby is a reluctant feeder it is important you hand express your colostrum, and give it to your baby by a teaspoon or syringe. Your midwife will help you with this if you need her/him. For more information please see

[http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Baby\\_Friendly/Leaflets/otbs\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Baby_Friendly/Leaflets/otbs_leaflet.pdf)

### How often does a baby feed?

On average a new baby feeds between 8 and 12 times in 24 hours. Night feeds are important to new babies. Babies do not feed in a strict regime (i.e. 4 hourly) they often cluster their feeds together. Don't forget while she/he was in your tummy they were being drip fed 24 hours a day, so it's not surprising that they need to feed often at first.

### How long should a breastfeed last?

A breastfeed can last from just a couple of minutes, if the baby just wants a little thirst quencher or up to 40 minutes, if they are hungry and want a three course dinner. This is just like us, sometimes we want a drink and other times we want a meal. Your baby may look full and sleepy when he comes off the first breast, but if you change his nappy or put him down for a few minutes while you prepare a drink or something to eat, he will often wake up and ask for the second breast. If the feeds are continually lasting more than 40 minutes give your Health Visitor or one on the infant feeding team a ring, you may need some help with adjusting your positioning and attachment.

### Why is he using me as a dummy at the end of the feed?

At the end of the feed your baby may look like he is asleep, if you pull your breast away from him slightly he will probably start sucking quickly again. The end of the feed is very important as it is when your baby is getting the rich fat filled milk. Don't worry too much if you need to take him off sometimes while you do the school run or get to an appointment but if you are at home put your feet up, have a drink, watch television, read a book and let him feed until he comes off all by himself.

### Will I make enough milk?

More feeding=more milk. In the early days of breastfeeding it is important to feed your baby 8-12 times in 24hours. As he grows, feeds tend to space out but those early, frequent feeds will ensure you have a good milk supply for the whole breastfeeding period.

### When should I start my baby on solids?

Introducing your baby to solid foods should start at around 6 months of age. Your Health Visitor will give you lots of information on how to do this.

Breastmilk is still an important part of your baby's diet and it's great to continue for the first year and beyond.

As long as you continue to breastfeed you are giving your baby lots of protective antibodies to prevent them baby getting an infection.

### Should I offer two breasts or one at each feed?

Breastfed babies are very good at deciding when they are full. They will require different amounts of breast milk at different times. Babies should always be offered both breasts at each feed. Sometimes they will take from both breasts, other times they might take a small amount from the second and they may just want to feed from one. It will all depend upon what their needs are at that particular time. Your baby may look full and sleepy when he comes off the first breast but if you change his nappy or put him down for a few minutes while you prepare a drink or something to eat he will often wake up and ask for the second breast.

### Does my baby need extra water?

Your baby needs only breast milk because it changes depending what you baby needs. If your baby needs more fluid, perhaps because the weather is warmer, the breast milk will change to provide this.

If you give anything else other than breast milk it will fill up your baby's stomach so they will not take as much milk. This in turn will mean that you will produce less milk.

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_125827.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_125827.pdf)

### What about night feeds?

ALWAYS let your baby determine the length of the feed. Your baby knows when he/she has had enough and will take themselves off the breast. A baby's tummy cannot hold huge amounts of milk and as breast milk is easily digested your baby will ask to feed more often. Nights feeds help boost your milk supply and prevent engorgement—there is no set age at which a baby will no longer need to feed through the night.

### How long can I store expressed breastmilk?

You can keep your breast milk at room temperature for up to 6 hours. Breast milk can be stored in a sterile container at the back of the fridge for up to 5 days, at a temperature of 4 degrees C or lower. Breast milk can be stored in a freezer for up to 6 months.

### Will my breasts end up saggy?

Breastfeeding often gets blamed for the sagging of breasts. Actually, it is life and not nursing that affects the shape and size of your breasts. Breastfeeding and gradual weaning make it more likely that fat will redeposit in your breasts, helping them to regain more of their pre-pregnancy appearance (Minchin, 1989). It is always a good idea to wear a supportive bra. Usually by about six months after weaning, your breasts will have returned to more of their pre-pregnancy look. They also will feel denser, as fatty tissue begins to fill them out again.

### What about alcohol?

Breastfeeding mothers can have occasional, small amounts of alcohol but should not drink heavily or regularly without planning how to limit exposure to the baby. Moderation is key - drinking any more than a couple of units at a time can affect the baby's development and reduce your milk supply. Peak levels appear after 30-90 minutes so to reduce alcohol exposure to the baby, mothers should avoid breastfeeding for 2-3 hours after drinking.

<http://www.nhs.uk/chq/pages/958.aspx?CategoryID=54&SubCategoryID=135#close>

### What about smoking?

It is of course well researched that smoking is not good for you or your family. Smoking whilst breastfeeding is NOT advised. However the benefits of breastfeeding and smoking are still greater than formula feeding.

### Do I have to eat a special diet?

No — your breast milk will be pretty perfect whatever you eat! The flavours of the food you eat will change the taste of your breast milk, which introduces your baby to family food. However, eating a healthy balanced diet yourself will be good for your own health and give you more energy. Drink when you feel thirsty.

### Can I breastfeed more than one baby?

The short answer is yes! There is no reason why you shouldn't be able to successfully breastfeed twins or more. The law of supply and demand applies to all mothers, including those of twins or more. If you breastfeed each time your babies are hungry, you can trust your body to supply enough milk.

### I have a tummy upset do I need to stop feeding whilst I am ill?

There is no need for you to stop feeding your baby in fact it will be of benefit to both of you to continue. Your body will produce antibodies to the infection; these will be passed through your breast milk to your baby and help to protect your baby from the infection. It is important that you do not stop feeding quickly as you may get blocked ducts or mastitis.

### When should I stop breastfeeding?

It is important you stop breastfeeding when you feel it is right for you and your baby! Some mothers feed in the early weeks only and some continue into the first year of their baby's life.

### Can I feed and return to work?

You do not have to stop breastfeeding when you go back to work. In fact it will be an important time to continue to protect you baby who will be meeting lots of new people and even new bugs! Research shows that women who breastfeed and return to work have less time off work through their or their baby's sickness. Employers have certain obligations towards breastfeeding women. Your Health Visitor or one of the infant feeding team can help you with an individual plan to help you to make returning to work and breastfeeding work for you. The leaflet 'Breastfeeding at Study or Work' will help you make preparations. Find this at <http://www.unicef.org.uk/BabyFriendly/Parents/Resources/Resources-for-parents/Breastfeeding-and-work/>

### How can I cope with blocked ducts?

A blocked duct is usually a lump in the breast which remains full of milk even after a breast feed is finished. It may also be red and painful.

This is usually easily unblocked by frequent feeding on the affected side, making sure the baby has a good attachment during the feed.

Gently massage (using a warm flannel), the lump towards the nipple during the feed.

If the baby is reluctant to feed you may need to use hand expressing or a breast pump to release the blockage.

**If you have any other breastfeeding queries come along and meet one of the team at your local breastfeeding group or ring one of the Infant Feeding Co-ordinators.**

## **Mastitis Signs:**

1. Red area on part of the breast
2. Lumpy breast which feels hot to the touch
3. Breast aches
4. Flu-like symptoms (aching, raised temperature, shivering, tired, tearful)

## **Treatment:**

1. Continue frequent breastfeeding
2. Hand express or use a pump to ensure breast is drained
3. Feed on sore side first
4. Try different feeding positions
5. Use warm flannel to soften breast
6. Check restrictive clothing
7. Rest
8. Take paracetamol and anti-inflammatory drug
9. Observe for reoccurrence

*If symptoms persist for 24 hours you will need to contact your local GP who will prescribe you antibiotics.*

The most common cause for a blocked duct / mastitis is incorrect attachment. Contact your local midwife / Health Visitor, or a member of the infant feeding team, who will observe a breastfeed and assess your baby's attachment.

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Mastitis/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

## **Thrush Signs:**

1. Little white patches in your baby's mouth, often seen inside cheeks, which do not wipe off.
2. Your nipples are itchy, sensitive or suddenly become painful.

**Both you and your baby should both be treated for thrush, even if only one of you has symptoms - this lessens the risk of re-infection.** Speak to your midwife, Health Visitor or a member of the infant feeding team for treatment.

## **Self-help measures include:**

1. Carry on breastfeeding
2. Careful hygiene, separate towel for family members
3. Boil dummies, teats, plastic toys for 20 minutes (thrush is not killed by normal sterilisation methods, and requires prolonged boiling to get completely of it.
4. Dummies should also be replaced weekly when thrush is present
5. Do not use stored breast milk during this time (may re-infect)
6. Consider simple analgesia if required

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/breastfeeding-problems.aspx#close>