

# off to the best start

Important  
information  
about feeding  
your baby



A good start for a healthier life



## the best start for your baby

What happens in your baby's first years has a big effect on how healthy he or she will be in the future.

Mum's milk gives your baby all the nutrients he or she needs for around the first 6 months of life (and it's important beyond 6 months too). It helps to protect your baby from infection and other diseases, and as a mum, it also reduces your chances of getting some illnesses later in life.

Infant formula is made from cows' milk and other ingredients. It doesn't contain the ingredients that help protect your baby from infection and disease. Only your body can make those.

Breastfeeding also helps you and your baby to get closer – physically and emotionally. So while you are feeding your baby, the bond between you grows stronger.



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# what does breastfeeding help protect against?

Your milk is perfect and uniquely made for your growing baby's needs. Giving your milk to your baby makes a big difference to both your baby's health and yours. And every day counts: the longer you feed your baby mum's milk, the more they benefit.

## Babies who are NOT breastfed have an increased chance of:

- Diarrhoea and vomiting and having to go to hospital as a result
- Chest infections and having to go to hospital as a result
- Ear infections
- Being fussy about new foods
- Being constipated
- Being obese which means they are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes and other illnesses later in life
- Developing eczema





## Breastfeeding is good news for mums as:

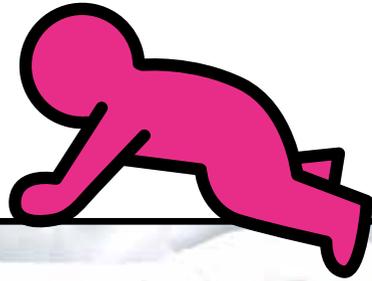
- It lowers the risk of mum getting breast and ovarian cancer
- It naturally uses up about 500 extra calories a day so mums who breastfeed often find it easier to lose their pregnancy weight
- It saves money – formula feeding can cost as much as £45 a month

# after your baby is born

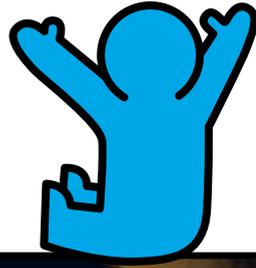
Holding your baby against your skin straight after birth will calm your baby. It will also steady his breathing and help to keep him warm.

This is a great time to start your first breastfeed because your baby will be alert and want to feed within a couple of hours of birth. Your midwife can help you with this.

Your baby will be happier if you keep him near you and feed him whenever he is hungry. This will remind your body to produce plenty of milk.



# how to breastfeed



## What position should you use?

There are lots of different positions for breastfeeding. You just need to check the following:

### Are your baby's head and body in a straight line?

If not, your baby might not be able to swallow easily.

### Are you holding your baby close to you?

Support his neck, shoulders and back. He should be able to tilt his head back easily. And he shouldn't have to reach out to feed.



### **Are you comfortable?**

It's worth getting comfortable before a feed, although it's ok to change your position slightly once the baby is attached to the breast.

### **Is your baby's nose opposite your nipple?**

Your baby needs to get a big mouthful of breast from underneath the nipple. Placing your baby with his nose level with your nipple will allow him to reach up and attach to the breast well.





**1.** Hold your baby's whole body close with his nose level with your nipple.



**2.** Let your baby's head tip back a little so that his top lip can brush against your nipple. This should help your baby to make a wide open mouth.



**3.** When your baby's mouth opens wide, his chin is able to touch your breast first, with his head tipped back so that his tongue can reach as much breast as possible.



**4.** With his chin firmly touching and his nose clear, his mouth is wide open and there will be much more of the darker skin visible above your baby's top lip than below his bottom lip. Your baby's cheeks will look full and rounded as they feed.

# signs that your baby is feeding well

- Your baby has a large mouthful of breast.
- Your baby's chin is firmly touching your breast.
- It doesn't hurt you when your baby feeds (although the first few sucks may feel strong).
- If you can see the dark skin around your nipple, you should see more dark skin above your baby's top lip than below your baby's bottom lip.
- Your baby's cheeks stay rounded during sucking.
- Your baby rhythmically takes long sucks and swallows (it is normal for your baby to pause from time to time).
- Your baby finishes the feed and comes off the breast on his or her own.





# top tips



## Try not to give your baby other food or drink

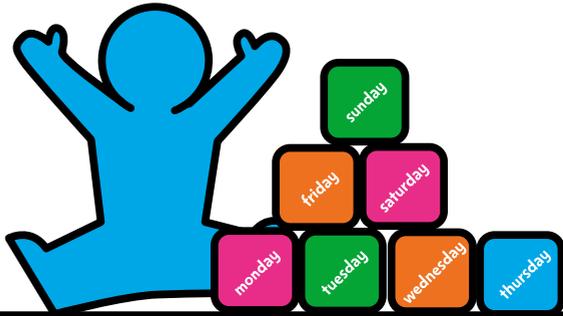
- The more mum's milk you give your baby, the more milk you will produce. Giving other food or drink will reduce your milk supply.
- If you give your baby less mum's milk, it will not protect your baby against illness as effectively.
- Feeding your baby solid food before they are ready (they are ready at around 6 months) could lead to him or her getting an upset tummy.

## Make sure your baby is properly attached to your breast

(see page 8/9)

- You will have a good supply of milk and your baby will get a good feed.
- It will help stop your breasts getting sore.





## Try not to give your baby a dummy

- Babies who have a dummy sometimes find it difficult to remember how to attach to mum's breast.
- Your baby will be less likely to feed when they need to, so won't take in as much milk.



## Don't be scared to ask for help

It can take a while before you feel confident. You can ask your midwife, health visitor or peer supporter to help you with breastfeeding, or call the National Breastfeeding Helpline: **0300 100 0212\***

You can also call Start4Life on **0300 123 1021\*** or visit **[www.nhs.uk/start4life](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life)**



For information on healthy eating for you while breastfeeding, see [www.eatwell.gov.uk](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk)

# expressing milk

## What does 'expressing milk' mean?

- Expressing milk means squeezing milk out of your breast.
- You can express milk by hand or with a hand pump or an electric pump.
- Different pumps suit different women, so ask for information to compare them.
- A pump needs to be clean and sterilised each time it is used.

## Why express milk?

If you express milk, your baby will still be able to have mum's milk even if somebody else is feeding them.

This may be useful if you are away from your baby or returning to work.

It's best to wait until your baby is a little older before regularly expressing milk for your partner to feed your baby, so you have a chance to get feeding going well first.

## Why express by hand?

If your breasts feel uncomfortably full.

If your baby isn't sucking well but you still want to give him mum's milk.

If you don't want to buy or use a pump to express milk.

In the first few days it is easier to express by hand.

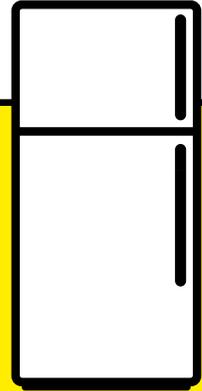
## How to express milk by hand

1. Have a clean sterilised container to hand before you start.
2. Cup your breast and feel back from the end of the nipple to where the texture of your breast feels different.
3. Using your thumb and the rest of your fingers in a C shape, gently squeeze this area – this shouldn't hurt.
4. Release the pressure and then repeat again and again, building up a rhythm. Avoid sliding your fingers over the skin. At first, only drops will appear, but just keep going as it will help build up your supply. With practice and a little more time, milk will flow freely.
5. When the flow slows down, move your fingers round to try a different section of your breast and repeat. When that flow slows down, swap to the other breast. Keep changing breasts until the milk is dripping very slowly or stops altogether.
6. If the milk doesn't flow, try moving your fingers slightly towards the nipple or further away, and try a gentle breast massage.



## Storing milk

- Remember to use a sterilised container to put the milk in.
- You can store mum's milk in the fridge for up to 5 days at 4°C or lower (usually at the back, never in the door).
- Mum's milk can be stored for 2 weeks in the ice compartment of a fridge or for up to 6 months in a freezer.
- Defrost frozen mum's milk in the fridge. Once thawed, use it straight away.
- If your baby prefers, you can warm the milk up to body temperature before feeding. Never heat milk in the microwave as it can cause hot spots which can burn your baby's mouth.



## Expressing milk for a baby who is premature or ill

If your baby has to stay in hospital, it is important to start expressing your milk as soon as possible after your baby is born.

In order to ensure that you produce plenty of milk, you will need to express at least 8 times over 24 hours, including during the night.

Ask the hospital staff about holding your baby in skin-to-skin contact. This can help with bonding and keeping up your milk supply.

If you are freezing mum's milk because your baby is premature or ill, ask the staff caring for your baby for advice.



# how do i know that my baby is getting enough milk?

Day 1

Day 2-3

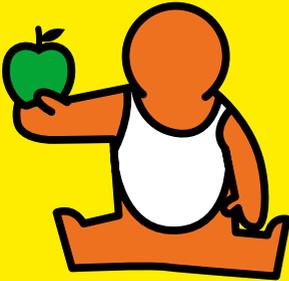
Day 4

- Your baby should be healthy and gaining weight after the first 2 weeks.
- In the first 48 hours, your baby is likely to have only 2 or 3 wet nappies. Wet nappies should then start to become more frequent, with at least 6 every 24 hours from day 5 onwards.
- At the beginning, your baby will pass a black tar-like stool (poo) called meconium. By day 3, this should be changing to a lighter, runnier, greenish stool that is easier to clean up. From day 4 and for the first few weeks, your baby should pass at least 2 yellow stools every day. These stools should be at least the size of a £2 coin. Remember, it's normal for breastfed babies to pass loose stools.
- Your breasts and nipples should not be sore. If they are, do ask for help.
- Your baby will be content and satisfied after most feeds and will come off the breast on their own.
- If you are concerned about any of these points, speak to your midwife or health visitor.

**For online information about breastfeeding, visit [www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk](http://www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk)**

Mum's milk is the healthiest way to feed your baby. If you decide not to breastfeed or to stop breastfeeding, it is possible to restart but it will be difficult. Giving infant formula to a breastfed baby will reduce your supply of mum's milk.

You do not need to eat any special foods while breastfeeding, but it is a good idea for you, just like everyone else, to eat a healthy diet. It is recommended that all pregnant and breastfeeding women take a daily supplement of 10 mcg of Vitamin D.



# what is start4life?

Start4Life is an initiative to help you give your baby a healthier start in life. There are 6 Start4Life building blocks, based on the latest infant health research:

1. mum's milk – why mums are the baby milk experts
2. every day counts – how each day of mum's milk makes a difference to your baby's health
3. no rush to mush – 3 signs that your baby is ready to start on solid foods
4. taste for life – how giving your baby a variety of food now may stop them turning into a fussy eater later
5. sweet as they are – how to avoid giving your baby a sweet tooth
6. baby moves – why it's important for all little ones to be lively and active



# We're here to help you

If you need to talk to someone about anything in this booklet, or anything to do with breastfeeding your baby, please ask.

## National Breastfeeding Helpline



0300 100 0212\*

[www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk)

Staffed by volunteers from:

- Association of Breastfeeding Mothers  
[www.abm.me.uk](http://www.abm.me.uk)
- The Breastfeeding Network  
[www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](http://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk)

## Start4Life



0300 123 1021\*

[www.nhs.uk/start4life](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life)

## The Breastfeeding Network Supportline in Bengali/Sylheti



0300 456 2421\*

## NCT Breastfeeding Line



0300 330 0771\*

[www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk)

## La Leche League



0845 120 2918

[www.laleche.org.uk](http://www.laleche.org.uk)



## UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative

UNICEF is the world's leading children's charity.

The Baby Friendly Initiative provides training and assessment for hospitals and community health services to enable them to give breastfeeding mothers the help and support they need to breastfeed successfully. Visit [www.babyfriendly.org.uk](http://www.babyfriendly.org.uk)

\*Calls to 03 numbers should cost no more than geographic 01 or 02 UK-wide calls and may be part of inclusive minutes subject to your provider and your call package. The National Breastfeeding Helpline is open from 9.30am to 9.30pm. The Start4Life lines are open from 9am to 8pm. Both are open 7 days a week.

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