General advice on breastfeeding

- How is breastfeeding good for both mother and baby?
- What are the disadvantages?
- What if you cannot or do not want to breastfeed?
- Only you can breastfeed, but how can other people support you?





When should you begin to breastfeed?

As soon as your baby is born, it should be placed on your chest – skin to skin. Some babies find the nipple on their own during the first hour after birth. Your midwife will help you make the connection.

When does the milk come in?

Your body starts producing colostrum (first milk) from the 16th week of pregnancy. Colostrum is a thick, protein-rich milk. It also contains antibodies that protect your baby against infection. After one or two days of breast-feeding, your breasts will feel full and taut. Mother’s milk changes after a few days, from yellowish to white and sometimes almost translucent. The nutritional content of your milk will always be attuned to your baby’s needs.

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General advice on breastfeeding

How do you know that your baby is hungry?

Here are some signs that your baby is hungry:

- Moves its head from side to side
- Opens its mouth, sticks out its tongue
- Moves its hands and fingers up to its mouth
- Makes sucking motions with its lips
- Rubs its nose against your breasts
- Exhibits the sucking reflex (moves its mouth towards something that touches its cheek)
- Is unsettled/cries

How do you know that your baby is full?

If your baby gives one or more of these signals after feeding, it may be full:

- Falls asleep, lets go of the nipple
- Relaxes its arms and fingers
- May be unsettled, turn away, whimper or cry

How do you know whether your baby needs a break from feeding?

Sometimes, the baby simply needs to take a break. If your baby gives these signals, you know that it needs a break:

- Regurgitates/spits up
- Gets milk stuck in its throat
- Pulls away
- Looks away
- Is unsettled/cries



Your baby may need to burp or rest for a while. Try to gently help your baby to burp and then offer it your breast once more. If your baby still turns away or refuses to suckle, it may be full.

When babies feed, they suckle 10 to 15 times, then pause for a few seconds before beginning to suckle again.
This is normal. Let your baby rest a while before you try and get it to take some more milk.

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General advice on breastfeeding

Latching on

Your baby needs to get a good grip on your nipple in order to suckle properly. This is called “latching on” and means that the baby is correctly positioned in relation to the nipple and has both the nipple and a large part of the brown area (the areola) firmly in its mouth. Latching on properly is the key to successful breastfeeding!

Support the breast with your hand.

Place your thumb on top and the other fingers underneath the breast, behind the areola. The nipple should be pointing towards the baby’s nose.

If the baby does not spontaneously open its mouth wide, you can encourage it to do so by stroking your nipple across the baby’s lips.

When your baby opens its mouth very wide, pull it close to you. You can see that your baby has latched on properly when its chin is tucked well into the breast and its nose is free to breathe. Your baby’s jaws are wide open and it has a lot of the breast in its mouth. You can see the baby's jaws moving right up to its ear.

Once the baby has latched on, you can adjust its position by drawing its lower body even closer to you. This gives the baby’s nose even more clearance to breathe and keeps its chin pressing into your breast.

Let the baby suckle until it lets go of its own accord and is full and content.

How-to videos:

Video (globalhealthmedia.org)

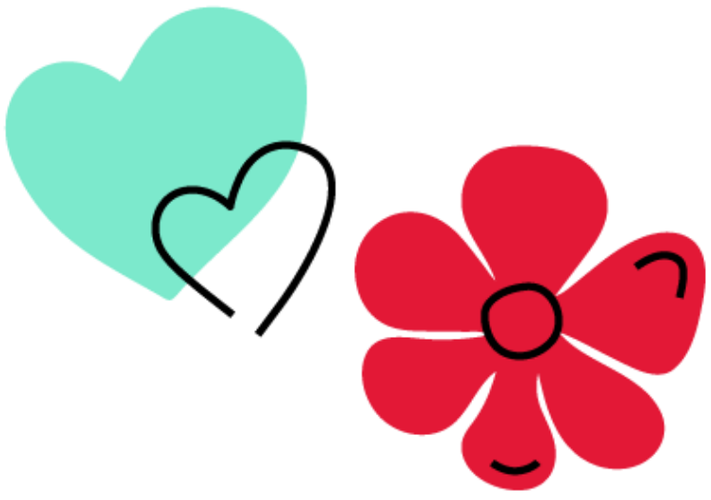
Video (ammehjelpen.no)

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How do you know if your baby has not latched on properly?

It hurts, and it does not get any better after the baby has sucked a few times. Your baby is probably sucking on your nipple without having enough of the areola in its mouth.

If this happens, slide your finger gently into the baby's mouth and open its jaws to interrupt its suckling. While the baby has its mouth open wide, put it back to the breast (with more of the areola) and continue feeding. If the situation does not improve, ask your health visitor or family nurse for help, or contact the breastfeeding organisation Ammehjelpen. You can also seek help from your post-natal ward for the first 14 days after giving birth.



Q&A about breastfeeding

Why does it hurt when my baby feeds?

If breastfeeding is painful, it is an indication that something is wrong. It is not unusual to feel a bit sore, but this normally goes away after the baby has sucked a few times. If it remains uncomfortable, you can ask for help. Contact your health visitor or family nurse, for example. They can help you make sure your baby is latching on properly, or identify any other problems.

Am I producing enough milk?

Breastfeeding is a matter of supply and demand. The more your baby feeds, the more milk your body will produce.

During the first few weeks of breastfeeding, it is important to give the baby only breast milk. This will stimulate your milk production. Try not to give the baby any additional formula milk, unless absolutely necessary. From time to time, the baby will experience growth spurts. During these periods, the baby’s appetite will increase and it will want to be fed more frequently. If you let your baby feed often, your milk production will increase, enabling you to meet their needs as they grow bigger.

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General advice on breastfeeding

Is it normal for babies to regurgitate their milk?

Many babies regurgitate (spit up) after they have fed. Babies often spit up when they burp. This is normal. As the baby grows bigger, they will regurgitate less.

As long as the baby is growing, gaining weight and seems content, spitting up is not a problem.

I am finding it hard to breastfeed, what can I do?

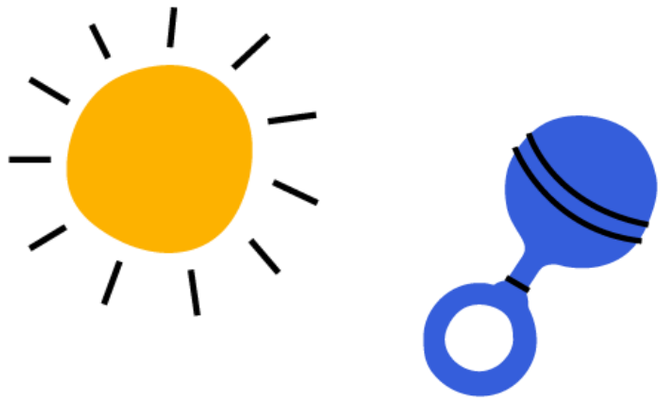
Many mothers and babies struggle to adapt to each other at the beginning. This is perfectly normal. While you are in hospital, you can ask a midwife or children's nurse to help you.

If you are still having difficulty when you come home, ask your health visitor or family nurse for more help. Be patient and give yourself time. Don't lose heart.
Keep practising until it gets easier for you and your baby.
Ask your family nurse or health visitor for help after you have come home.

How do I know if my baby is getting enough to eat?

Newborns are getting enough to eat if they

- Are steadily gaining weight and showing clear signs of hunger
- They feed at least 8 times a day (24-hour period)
- They suck vigorously and swallow
- They have at least 6 wet nappies a day (24-hour period)
- They have (at least) 2 soiled nappies a day (24-hour period)
- If you are worried about whether your baby is eating enough, talk to your child health clinic or family nurse



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General advice on breastfeeding

What should my baby's poo look like?

At the beginning, a newborn's poo is thick and tar-like. As your milk production increases (3 or 4 days after giving birth), your baby's poo will become more yellowish green in colour.

The more your baby eats, the more nappies it will fill.
At the very beginning, your baby may fill its nappy only once a day.

After 2 to 4 days, you should look for these signs:

- At least 6 wet nappies a day. The urine will be a very pale colour and completely transparent
- Yellowish poo at least 2 to 5 times a day.
  Your baby may fill its nappy after every meal.
- After about a month, babies who are breastfed will have fewer soiled nappies per day. While some will continue to poo several times a day, others may not do so even once a day.



How often should I breastfeed my baby?

For the first month, your baby should feed at least 8 times in a day (24-hour period). Let your baby feed "on demand" (whenever it is hungry).
Usually, your baby will want to be fed every 1 to 3 hours. As your baby gets bigger, it will feed less frequently. Keep an eye on your baby and what it is telling you, not on the clock.

Should I swap breasts?

For the first 3 to 4 days, your baby should be encouraged to suckle from both breasts.

Make sure the baby empties one breast before offering the other one. It is important that your baby also consumes the nutritious hindmilk, which is produced at the end of the feed. If you swap breasts too quickly, your baby will not benefit from the fat contained in the hindmilk.

Follow your baby's signals and swap breasts when it no longer wants to suckle from the first one. If your baby falls asleep at the first breast, gently help it to burp and then offer it the other breast. Your baby may start suckling straight away or it may take the other breast later on. When the volume of your milk production increases (around day 3 or 4), your baby may not want to feed from the other breast, but you can offer it anyway.

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General advice on breastfeeding

How often should I burp my baby?

Let your baby suckle its fill from one breast, then help it to burp. Swap sides. Burp your baby once again after it has finished suckling from the other breast. Many breastfed babies don't burp when they have finished feeding. If your baby falls asleep at the breast, let it continue sleeping unless it seems unsettled.

For more information:

oslo-universitetssykehus.no (breastfeeding)

ammehjelpen.no





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