breast feeding your baby
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WHEN YOU BREAST FEED your baby, you add something special to his life—and yours.

It is an enjoyable, cooperative act that gives emotional support to both of you.

It furnishes your baby a food that is clean, that suits him, and will make him grow.

Nothing quite gives you such a feeling of well-being as when your baby is put to the breast again and again.

If you want to breast feed your baby, you are already a long way toward being successful.

First, talk it over with your husband. You two will want to plan together in this undertaking as you will be doing in all things that concern the baby.
Also, it is a good idea to tell your doctor your wishes about feeding your baby. Many doctors are able to give much backing and support.

Caring for your breasts

Around the fourth or fifth month of pregnancy—and for some women later—a yellow secretion called colostrum begins to ooze from the nipples. When this starts, each day wash the nipples with water. Do not use soap or alcohol on them. They dry out or weaken the skin which can cause trouble.

If your breasts feel heavy or tender, a breast sup-

Provided by the Maternal and Child Health Library, Georgetown University
port or brassiere that raises the breasts but doesn't press or bind may help.

After your baby is born, it is not necessary to clean your nipples any special way. Just wash them with plain water. If they leak enough to need protection, fold a clean cloth or a big handkerchief and put it in your brassiere. You will probably need this during nursing on the breast that hasn't yet been nursed, since milk comes into the nipples on both breasts as soon as the baby starts nursing on one. The cloth or handkerchief can be sterilized easily by ironing with a hot iron.

Should your nipples become sore, expose them to the air as much as you can. If they keep on being sore, see your doctor about them. At each feeding, air dry one breast while the baby is nursing the other. Moderate tenderness may be managed by starting on the good nipple for the next two or three feedings and cutting down on the length of feeding.

**Begin nursing early**

In getting ready for the baby, if possible, plan to get someone to help you to run the house at least
for the first month after he is born. Then, when you get home from the hospital, you can spend most of your time taking care of the baby and getting a good milk supply underway. At first, let the housework slide as much as you can.

Most hospitals bring the baby to the mother for the first nursing about 12 hours after birth. Some hospitals bring the baby as soon as the mother wants to put him to her breast.

Some communities have hospitals that let mothers and babies stay together in the same room or bring
the babies to their mothers to nurse at least six times a day.

The first food your baby will get from your breast is the colostrum that is already there. This yellowish fluid takes care of his first hunger and is good for him. It stimulates his bowels and gives him valuable protection from certain infections. It contains certain factors of great value not found in later milk.

It may take your baby several days to get used to nursing, but don’t become discouraged. However, don’t try too hard or persevere too long each time lest the nipples become sore.

These first visits are gentle, get-acquainted times. Don’t expect too much from the baby or yourself. While cuddling him in your arms, place the nipple of your breast to his cheek. That encourages him to hunt the nipple. The baby may try side-to-side motions of his head. That helps to cause the nipple to become erect and easier for him to get into his mouth. Until the baby learns to nurse, it may help to express a few drops of milk from the breast to encourage him to suck.

He does better if his mouth is well up on the breast so that the gums press the darkish area around the nipple. That position presses the nipple far back
into his mouth and helps to keep it from getting sore. Sucking with his lips and tongue keeps the nipple in place.

**Get comfortable when you nurse**

When you are nursing your baby, try out many positions until you find the one that best suits both of you. Sit up, or lean back in a chair. A low chair that gives support for your arms may be just right. A low
rocking chair is ideal. A footstool may add to your comfort.

Some mothers find that the best way for nursing is to lie down. They try to arrange it so that both can sleep after nursing, or that she can doze while her baby nurses. When you are relaxed, your milk flows more readily to your baby’s sucking. Get as much rest as you can, both day and night. Learn to rest during the nursing period.

Nursing times may be irregular

During the first few weeks, feedings may be irregular. Your baby may sleep most of the time and wake up only when he is hungry. That is the time to feed him. If your baby stays awake a good deal—and a great many do—don’t worry. If he wants to stay awake, that is fine.

After the first few weeks, most babies settle down to a fairly regular time for food. For the first month, your baby may nurse as many as 10 times a day. For the next 4 to 6 weeks, some babies nurse about 8 times a day. During this time many of them want night feedings also. In general these usually stop as
he begins to sleep through the night after the late evening nursing. But if your baby wakes up and is hungry, nurse him.

There is nothing sacred about the exact hour for feeding. If you and the baby both oversleep some morning, you may find it best to make all the feedings for the day a bit later than usual.

As your baby grows older, he will begin to ask for feedings less and less frequently. He will probably begin to take one good long nap or two each day at times you can count on and also may begin to go to sleep about the same time each night. A good time to slip away from your baby briefly, if you have someone to look after him in the house, is just after a feeding during nap time.

Sometimes your baby will nurse longer than at other times. Usually, first morning feedings are longer. The baby is rested then and the mother has more milk. Young babies usually like to nurse longer than older babies. Mid-day feedings are often shorter than late afternoon and evening feedings. Sometimes the baby may feel the need of the extra comforting that comes with leisurely long cuddling and sucking. No need to watch the clock. Baby will go to sleep or let go of the nipple when he is satisfied.
Nurse him when he's hungry

There is no rigid rule as to how often and for how long a baby should be nursed.

A baby may often seem to be especially hungry for a time. He may want to nurse quite frequently for a day or two. Then when his nursing brings in more milk, he may level off the number of feedings.

A baby's nursing and the number of times he nurses each day has a great deal to do with whether breast feeding is successful or not.

For the first few days or more, some mothers find that it is best to let the baby nurse often but briefly and from both breasts at each session. Frequent nursing stimulates the flow of milk. In other words, the more the baby sucks, the more milk you will have.

While your breasts are still giving only a small amount of milk, your baby may cry because he is hungry just a short time after he has been fed. If he does, let him nurse again.

Not every cry means that your baby is hungry, however. Sometimes he may cry soon after he has been fed because he is uncomfortable or wants to be held and loved or gently rocked. See if he is dry and warm. In hot weather it may be he has too much cover. Pick
him up for a minute, or turn him over and give him a pat or two. If it is a bubble, it may take some time for it to come up. If after this he does not want to settle down, he may be trying to tell you he is still hungry. If this seems likely, let him nurse.

Usually gets enough liquid

Usually your baby gets all the liquid he needs while breast feeding. The number and wetness of the diapers show this. In hot weather, when you yourself are sweating, the baby may like a sip or two of water. Offer your baby water from a bottle, spoon, or a very shallow cup.

Constipation is not a problem

Usually, constipation (hard, dry stools) is not a problem with breast-fed babies, because breast milk is so well digested. During the first few weeks the baby usually has a small, soft, or liquid greenish or yellow stool with nearly every feeding.

Some healthy older breast-fed babies may go as
long as 2 or 3 days without a bowel movement. This is not constipation for when the bowel movement arrives, it is soft.

Eat wisely while nursing your baby

A good diet will help you to keep healthy and therefore will help to promote successful nursing. Plan your meals to include: milk and milk products; lean meats, poultry, fish, and eggs; green leafy or yellow vegetables; citrus fruits; breads and cereals. These are basic and essential foods to include in your diet each day.

The following guide will help you in selecting the type of food and the amount you should eat each day.

Milk Group—4 cups or more:

Milk (fluid whole, evaporated, skim, dry, buttermilk). Dairy products such as Cheddar cheese, cottage cheese, and ice cream may be used sometimes in place of milk.

Foods which are equivalent in value to
1 cup of fluid whole milk: 1½ to 1⅓ ounce Cheddar cheese or 2 one-inch cubes; ¼ cup of powdered whole milk; ½ cup of evaporated milk; ¼ cup of powdered skim milk.

Meat Group—Choose three or more servings:

Meat, fish, poultry, egg. As alternate: Dry beans, dry peas, lentils, nuts, and peanut butter. Count as serving: 2 to 3 ounces of lean cooked meat, poultry, or fish (without bone) or 2 eggs or 1 cup cooked dry beans, peas, etc., or 4 tablespoons peanut butter.

Alternate foods for a 2-3 ounce serving of meat, fish, or poultry: ½ cup of cottage cheese; 3 ounces of American or Cheddar type cheese; ½ cup of shelled nuts; 1 cup of cooked beans, peas, or lentils; 4 tablespoons of peanut butter; 2 eggs.

Vegetable-Fruit Group—Choose five or more servings including:

Citrus or other fruit or vegetable high in
vitamin C such as grapefruit, orange, tomato (whole or in juice), raw cabbage, broccoli, fresh strawberries, guava, mango, papaya, cantaloupe—two servings. Count as serving: \( \frac{1}{2} \) cup or a portion as ordinarily served such as medium orange, half grapefruit.

Dark green or deep yellow vegetable for vitamin A. You can judge fairly well by color—dark green and deep yellow—apricots, broccoli, cantaloup, carrots, greens, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, winter squash—one serving at least every other day. Count as serving: \( \frac{1}{2} \) cup.

Other fruit and vegetable including potato—two servings. Count as serving: \( \frac{1}{2} \) cup or a portion as ordinarily served such as medium-size potato or apple.

**Bread and Cereal Group—Choose four or more servings:**

Whole grain, enriched or restored bread and cereal, and other grain products as cornmeal, grits, macaroni, spaghetti, and rice. Count as serving: 1 slice of bread;
1 ounce ready-to-eat cereal; 1/2 cup to 3/4 cup cooked cereal, cornmeal, grits, macaroni, noodles, rice, or spaghetti.

In addition to the foods listed above, sugars, oils, margarine, butter, and other fats may be used in many ways to complete meals and to satisfy appetites.

Serving sizes may need to be varied depending upon your height, weight, and activity. Most women should eat the amount that keeps them from gaining or losing weight while nursing. Ask your doctor for advice if you are underweight or overweight.

Using this guide, your menu plans for 1 day might look like this:

**Breakfast:** Grapefruit juice, scrambled eggs, bread with butter or margarine, coffee if desired

**Mid-morning snack:** Oatmeal cookie, milk or cheese

**Lunch:** Bean soup, carrot salad, bread with butter or margarine, canned fruit, milk, coffee or tea

**Afternoon snack:** Fruit, peanut butter sandwich
Dinner: Meat loaf, mashed potatoes, greens, bread with butter or margarine, gelatin dessert, milk, coffee, or tea

Evening snack: Cocoa, fruit

Certain clothes help

In some cultures, women's dresses are designed to make breast feeding easy. That is not commonly true in this country. You may find it easier to feed frequently if you wear a nursing brassiere or any brassiere that undoes at the front instead of the back. Blouses that button down the front or sweaters that can be pulled up from the waist during breast feeding are convenient, too.

One simple way to preserve privacy while you nurse is to wrap the baby in a small blanket. Leave one corner to throw lightly over your shoulder so that it forms a little tent for him. Then you can hold or carry him and other persons will not know whether you are nursing him or not. This will come in handy later on when you and the baby begin to visit friends and go out and the baby decides that he's hungry at just that time.
When is the time to wean?

When to stop breast feeding your baby depends on many things, mainly your baby, you and circumstances. If you are staying at home (in other words, if you are not working away from home), if you are in good health, and have a good milk supply, leave it up to the baby when you wean him. This may be 6 to 8 months and for some babies longer.

The first step for some mothers is to replace some breast feeding with cow's milk feedings. You may find it convenient to give up the evening or night breast feeding last. Many babies nurse at these times although weaned for the day. If your baby wants to continue such feedings even for a year or more, that's fine.

When your baby can drink from a cup, sit up to the table, join the family circle, and show generally that he is growing up and eating in other ways, he no longer needs nursing for nourishment and may start cutting down on nursing. But continue to nurse him because he still needs to be cuddled, held close to you, and loved.

Ideally, babies wean themselves. With some
babies, a gradual intake of other foods is all that it takes.

One thing at a time

Don't try to wean your baby at the same time that he is getting used to something else that is new—like living in a new house. One new thing at a time is enough.

At weaning time, your baby should show less interest in sucking than he used to—that is, if he has begun to shorten the usual time and if he has learned to drink well from a cup, you can wean him onto a cup. But if he does not drink well from a cup, or still shows that he wants to suck, and yet must be weaned from the breast, it may be better to put him on a bottle.

Ask your doctor whether he should have whole milk or a milk mixture and how to mix it.

Your baby needs foods besides milk

Breast milk does not naturally contain enough vitamin D, which babies need to help build bones and
teeth. Your doctor may wish you to add vitamin D to be sure your baby is getting enough. Ask your doctor about the type of vitamin D preparation to use, how much, and how long to give it. Too much vitamin D can be harmful. So give only what your doctor tells you to.

If your baby is getting an adequate amount of breast milk during the first few weeks, this will supply his need for vitamin C. As the number of breast feedings are reduced, it is necessary to start foods which are rich in vitamin C, such as fresh, frozen, or canned orange juice or fruit drinks fortified with vitamin C. Begin with a small amount of fruit juice
and gradually increase. By age 3 or 4 months, your baby will be taking 4 or 5 tablespoons of fruit juice.

Starting supplemental feeding

1 to 3 months.—Your baby needs a source of iron added to his diet at an early age to insure that anemia will not develop. Most baby foods do not have enough iron. For this reason many doctors advise beginning cereal fortified with iron in early infancy (usually by age 6 weeks). Ask your doctor about this. Start with only about a teaspoon of cereal mixed with water or milk. Give him a taste or two. He may spit it out. It takes a while to get used to new textures and flavors. Gradually add a little more cereal until he is getting 2 to 5 tablespoons once or twice a day. Over a period of several months, he will take the larger amount.

Iron fortified cereal is not expensive and is a rich source of iron for your baby. He does not outgrow his need for iron so it is desirable to continue giving him cereal fortified with iron until about the time of his second birthday.

Strained fruits such as applesauce, peaches,
pears, or mashed bananas are liked by most babies.

Some doctors start babies on vegetables before fruits. Strained carrots, squash, spinach, green beans are good ones to choose.

4 to 8 months.—Once your baby is eating cereals, fruits, and vegetables, other foods may be added such as strained meat, fish, poultry, and egg yolk. Don’t be too eager to start foods before your baby is ready for them or needs them. Each baby may follow a different schedule for accepting foods. Give one or more of these solid foods several times a day at this age. Continue to give cereal fortified with iron in order to meet his need for iron.

Be on the lookout for the time when your baby is ready to start something new, such as drinking milk or juice from a cup. Soon he will be eating with his fingers, which is good practice for self-feeding.

Helpful hints

Now that you are well into breast feeding your baby, here are some things you can do to help toward being successful.
Your daily work will give you enough exercise. But watch that you don't get too tired.

Eat the foods that will keep you healthy and provide for the baby's growth and well-being. This folder talks about these foods on page 11.

Ask your doctor if he wants you to increase your fluid intake. He may recommend that you drink several glasses of water in addition to the fluids you get in your daily diet.

If you smoke and use alcoholic beverages, talk with your doctor about this, as doctors differ in their opinions about this. Most advise against excess.

Keep your body clean. Take a shower or sponge bath often—every day if you can. But don't take a tub bath until your doctor says it is all right.

Try to spend time with friends and relatives who have enjoyed breast feeding. Talk to them when you feel blue or discouraged about breast feeding.

Try not to worry. If you are not sure about something, ask your doctor or nurse. Don't make things hard for yourself by wondering all the time if you are doing the right thing. Remember that lots of mothers raised babies successfully who didn't know as much about it as you do from just reading this folder.