

BREASTFEEDING

in the First Few Weeks

Breastmilk is the natural food for newborns. It contains everything your baby needs!



Both moms and babies need time to learn to breastfeed. Sometimes it can take up to 6 weeks before things feel right.

To get the best start possible, ensure that you:

- ▶ have a good latch
- ▶ feed your baby often, and
- ▶ practise lots of skin-to-skin contact with your new baby.

Skin to skin contact means having your baby dressed only in a diaper and placed on your bare chest. The longer you and your baby can do this, the better. This can help:

- ▶ keep your baby warm
- ▶ you and your baby to relax
- ▶ your milk to flow
- ▶ to promote a good latch
- ▶ to improve milk supply

Feed your baby when they first start showing **feeding cues**:

- ▶ fluttering eye movements during light sleep
- ▶ wiggling, moving arms and legs
- ▶ hand to mouth movements
- ▶ rooting – turning head from side to side and trying to reach things with their mouth
- ▶ sucking sounds and movements

Cluster feeding (feeding as often as every hour) is normal during the early weeks of breastfeeding and most often occurs in the evening and overnight.

Follow and trust your baby's feeding cues.

Signs breastfeeding is going well:

- ▶ Your baby feeds at least 8 times in every 24 hours.
- ▶ Your baby has enough wet and dirty diapers according to his age (see chart)
- ▶ Your baby is active and has a strong cry.
- ▶ Your baby has a wet, pink mouth, and bright eyes.

Here is what to expect in terms of output
(*wet and dirty diapers*):

Baby's Age	Day 1	Day 2	Days 3-5	Days 6 +
Wet Diapers	1 or more	2 or more	4 or more	6 or more
Dirty Diapers	1-2 black/ dark green	1-2 black/ dark green	3 or more brown, green or yellow	3 or more soft, seedy & yellow

If your baby does **not** have the above signs or the number of wet and dirty diapers you would expect, seek breastfeeding support.

Other reasons to get breastfeeding support include:

- ▶ when your nipples hurt
- ▶ your breasts feel hard and painful
- ▶ you feel like you have the flu

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Support is available from:

- ▶ A Public Health Nurse at the Health Action Line
1-800-660-5853 (Mon–Fri 8:30-4:30)
- ▶ Your local hospital where you delivered
- ▶ La Leche League 1-800-665-4324

or

Visit our website at www.healthunit.org/children to



access the Breastfeeding Matters booklet and a list of Community Breastfeeding Supports.

