



## 10 VALUABLE TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL BREAST-FEEDING

### 1. AN EARLY START IS THE BEST START

Breast-feed your baby as soon as possible after birth. Babies are often more alert and interested in feeding in the first hour following birth than later that day; Use the help of experienced nursing staff. *Relax- you're both learning!* So feed often on request; perhaps every two to three hours during the day and when baby wakes at night. Have your baby room in with you in the hospital.

- As soon as you are able to, sit to feed your baby, support your back and put a pillow on your knees for everybody's comfort. Bring your baby to your breast rather than your breast to your baby.
- Hold the baby close to your body, skin to skin, tummy to tummy, face to breast and mouth to nipple.
- Support your breast by holding four fingers underneath, away from the areola (dark area), with your thumb on top.
- Stimulate baby's lips gently with your nipple until her mouth opens as a big yawn. Arouse your baby's senses of taste and smell by expressing a few drops of milk.
- When her mouth is open wide, pull baby towards you quickly; when the baby feels your nipple with her tongue, her lips will close over the areola and seal it; both lips should be rolled outwards. You should see the sucking motion along the jaw line.
- To release the baby's suction, gently place a finger in the corner of her mouth until you break the suction.

### 2. GETTING STARTED

#### WHAT HAPPENS?

At the baby's birth your first milk is colostrums, a yellowish fluid rich in vitamins, protein and immune factors. Breast-feeding often on request will help the milk come in gradually and the quantity to increase. As the colostrums decreases, mother's milk may look thinner and watery, but it is your baby's perfect miracle fast food.

Usually, the milk will be "let-down" and fill your breasts when the baby starts to suck. You may feel the tingling sensation of your milk letting down. But sometimes it happens earlier, spontaneously or in response to a baby's cry, and the breasts fill up and leak. If your breasts should leak, tuck breast pads in your bra to absorb the extra milk.

*A - Class Nannies & Caregivers Inc.*

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## HOW TO HOLD YOUR BABY?

There are many breast-feeding positions; discover the one that is most comfortable for you and your baby. Sit up as soon as possible. If you have had a caesarean birth, you may need help to position yourself and your baby comfortably. Get help from nurses, your doctor, midwife, or a breast-feeding counsellor.

## HOW OFTEN?

Breast-fed babies prefer a span of two to three hours from the beginning of one feeding to the beginning of the next. Mother's milk is digested more easily than formula. You don't need to give an kind of supplement- not even water. With frequent nursing, your baby will get enough nourishment. The usual pattern is this: nurse the baby on one side; then, after time out for a burp or diaper change, switch to the other side. At the next feeding, reverse the order, offering her the last used side first. Some babies prefer several "short courses", others prefer one long feeding. Don't rush her –take your time.

## HOW MUCH?

A breast-fed baby needs frequent feedings. Allowing your infant to nurse at need (ranging from eight to 12 times in a 24 hour period), will help establish your milk supply. Wake a Sleepy baby during the daytime to feed her, especially if she sleeps for long stretches at night.

Your baby is likely getting enough when she has six or more wet diapers a day, has frequent bowel movements, and is gaining weight and growing longer.

### 3. **REMEMBER, IT'S THE LAW OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND!**

The more your baby nurses, the more milk you produce. As your baby gets older, she may nurse every three to four hours for a few days, will help increase your milk supply and satisfy her increased appetite.

Remember that your baby's nutritional needs can be completely met by your milk supply without added supplementary feedings.

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#### 4. THE COMPLETE FOOD

Breast milk is the most balanced food you can offer your infant! It has just the right level and quality of nutrients to suit your child's first food needs. It contains antibodies that reduce the likelihood of allergic reactions. Breast-feeding aids the return of the uterus to normal size, allows mom and baby to begin a special relationship, and is convenient and economical. With breast-feeding, there is no need to sterilize or warm bottles, nor are there any bottles to take when you leave home with your child. The process is simple, natural free and safer for the environment.

#### 5. LOOKING AFTER MOM, TOO

In the early days, your nipples may be tender. Because this part of the body is not usually exposed, nipples need lots of air and light to toughen. For the first few days, expose your nipples to air or light after each feeding. Allow some breast milk to dry on your nipples; it has a lubricating and anti-infective properties.

Change nursing pads when they are wet. Sometimes breasts get swollen and hurt because of increased blood supply and the accumulation of milk. This condition is called "engorged breasts." Wearing a well-fitting bra, applying warmth (warm towels or shower) to ease the milk flow, expressing some milk before feeding to relieve fullness, and nursing frequently to allow your breasts to empty will help.

When your milk supply is established, you may learn to express or pump milk so that it can be left with a care-giver to give to the baby, and then you can get out occasionally or just have a well-deserved break.

#### 6. WORKING AND BREAST-FEEDING

It is important to understand that the first weeks are the learning period for both of you, and that time, patience, and humour will solve many problems.

During this time, your milk supply is becoming established, so it's difficult to have anyone but you feed the baby. After that, you can express milk manually or mechanically, by using a breast pump before you go to work, or at work, for feedings throughout the day. Your own breast milk can be stored in the refrigerator (for up to 48 hours) frozen. Refrigerate or freeze breast milk in plastic bottles or bags and date them. Then warm it up in hot tap water before it is used. (Using a microwave oven is not recommended.)

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## 7. **BREAST-FEEDING AND PREGNANCY**

Don't rely on the old myth that you won't get pregnant because you are nursing! It's not always true. It may postpone the return of ovulation and menstruation, but ovulation can occur, so you and your partner should use precautions! Discuss birth control alternatives with your doctor.

## 8. **THOUGHTFUL REMINDERS**

### **GET LOTS OF REST**

Be as good to yourself as you can. Try to nap when baby naps. Accept help with housework and meals from your partner, family and friends. Do only what housekeeping must be done. Limit your visitors. Go to bed early.

### **EAT WELL**

The foods you choose are important when you are breast-feeding, to ensure good health for you and your baby. Follow Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating for basic nutrition and drink extra fluids to keep your milk supply adequate. The only foods you must avoid are those to which you might be allergic.

Nursing mothers are discouraged from going on weight loss diets as they may cause the milk supply to decrease. While nursing, you may gradually lose weight, and the extra weight gained during pregnancy is used to provide part of the energy needed to make breast milk.

### **HAVE PLENTY TO DRINK**

You'll find you are extra thirsty, so have a glass of juice, milk or water every time the baby nurses. Remember if you smoke or drink alcohol: tobacco, alcohol and other drugs can pass into your breast milk and may harm your baby.

### **BE COMFORTABLE**

Relax in the bathtub. It's good therapy. Walk. Gradually resume some exercise. Plan an evening out regularly. Motherhood and fatherhood are new roles that need to be talked over and learned together. Keep the lines of communication open.

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#### 9. TALK TO OTHERS

Personal contact with other nursing others is important for confident breast-feeding. Don't keep concerns to yourself. Call a friend, La Leche League, the public health nurse, a lactation consultant, or your doctor or midwife. It helps to talk to someone.

#### 10. ENJOY YOUR BABY!

Holding your baby close stimulates her sense of touch, smell and taste. A baby who is smiled at, talked to and cuddled develops a sense of security.

Breast feeding is more than simply providing nutrients and calories for physical growth – it contributes to a special closeness. So have confidence in nature and in yourself and give your little one the very best start in life!

Courtesy of Health Canada

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