



These 10 Valuable Tips will help make your breastfeeding experience more successful and enjoyable.

10 Valuable Tips for Successful Breastfeeding

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Today, most mothers are choosing to breastfeed their babies. As more Alabama families understand just how much of a difference breastfeeding makes to the health of both the mother and her baby, more families are supporting mothers to breastfeed longer.

Here are 10 Valuable Tips for Successful Breastfeeding:

1. Breastfeed Right After Birth

- Cuddle your baby on your chest to welcome him/her into the world
- Skin-to-skin promotes milk production and baby's feeding reflexes are triggered
- Baby will start looking/rooting for the breast and more breast milk will be made
- Babies are often more alert and interested in feeding in the first hour following birth
- Remaining skin-to-skin will help baby regulate body temperature, blood sugar, and reduce stress
- For caesarean births, the mother or father can hold the baby skin-to-skin until the baby can enjoy his/her first feed

How to Feed Your Baby

- Look for baby's early signs of wanting to feed, such as rooting, licking lips, and/or putting hands in the mouth. Crying is a late hunger cue
- Sit or lie down comfortably, if you are uncomfortable then baby will sense and also be uncomfortable
- Relax your shoulders and bring baby to your breast rather than your breast to baby
- Hold baby close, nose to nipple and chin to breast. Support baby's neck and shoulders firmly without pushing the back of baby's head as this often makes the baby push away from the breast
- Support your breast by holding four fingers underneath, away from the areola (dark area), with your thumb on top. Express a few drops of milk to awaken baby's sense of taste and smell
- Rest baby's chin on the breast, nose to nipple until his/her mouth opens as big as a yawn and his/her head moves back to take a big mouthful of the breast. You can also gently touch baby's lips until the mouth opens very wide
- When baby feels your nipple with his/her tongue, the lips will close over the areola and nipple and form a seal; both lips should be rolled outwards. You will feel baby suckling gently at first and then deeply and rhythmically, one or two sucks per swallow, with little pauses to rest
- When baby comes off the breast or is no longer suckling actively, burp and offer the other breast
- If you need to take baby off the breast, gently place a finger in the corner of his/her mouth until you break the suction

There are many breastfeeding positions; find the one that is most comfortable for you and your baby. If you have had a caesarean birth, you may need help to position yourself and your baby comfortably. Ask for help from nurses, your doctor, and/or a lactation counselor or consultant.

2. Getting Started

- The first milk is called Colostrum, a fluid rich in vitamins, protein, and immune factors to protect your baby
- A newborn's stomach is very small and cannot hold a large amount of milk – this is why “first milk” is very concentrated and why babies want to feed often in the beginning
- Baby's stomach at 1 day of life is about the size of a marble, day 3-5 about the size of a golf ball, and day 7-10 about the size of a tennis ball
- Learn how to express your milk by hand so that you can attract baby's attention to help start a feeding and to relieve breast fullness, if needed
- At the end of a feed, express a few more drops of milk and gently rub into your nipple to help prevent drying and cracking

- Feeding baby often will help increase milk supply. The more baby breastfeeds – the more milk you will produce – “Supply and Demand”

Watch the Baby not the Clock

- Instead of timing feeds by the clock, look for baby’s early signs of wanting to feed (rooting, licking lips, putting hand to the mouth)
- Babies need to eat often in the first weeks – 8 or more times in 24 hours
- Night feeds are important to establish breastfeeding and to maintain milk production

The usual pattern is: feed baby on one breast until he/she stops suckling, burp, change diaper, and then offer the other breast. The next time you breastfeed, start with the breast on which he/she finished the last time. Some babies prefer several “short courses”; others prefer one long feeding. Do not rush baby – take your time.

Signs Your Baby is Getting Enough Breast Milk:

- Weight gain is a very good sign that baby is breastfeeding well
- By two weeks of age, baby will most likely have regained their birth weight
- On average, five or more ounces each week after the first two weeks
- Six or more wet diapers a day by day six and frequent bowel movements are good signs of feeding

3. Milk Production

- The more baby breastfeeds, the more milk you produce
- As baby gets older, he/she may breastfeed for a shorter time or less frequently and be satisfied
- During periods of growth spurts, baby will feed more often for a few days in order to satisfy an increased appetite
- During these times, your breast milk will increase to meet baby’s needs

4. The Complete Food

- Research shows that breast milk is so important that it is the ONLY food or drink your baby needs for the first six months of life
- As baby grows your milk will also change to keep up with baby’s needs and continues to have just the right amount of nutrients
- Breast milk contains antibodies and other immune factors that help protect against infections and disease – benefits that last a lifetime
- Beginning at 6 months of age, babies need to replenish their iron reserves by adding a variety of foods in addition to breast milk
- Breast milk is convenient, always the right temperature, economical, and better for the environment

5. Looking After Mom

- Mom should rest when baby sleeps
- Mom should eat healthy meals and drink plenty of fluids
- If your nipples are tender, make sure baby is latched properly to your breast when feeding
- Support mom’s efforts in breastfeeding
- Allow some breast milk to dry on your nipples; it has lubricating and anti-infective properties
- If breasts get swollen and painful (engorged), cold compresses decrease swelling, then gentle massaging and warmth (warm towels or taking warm showers) will help milk to flow
- Expressing some milk before feeding to relieve fullness and breastfeed frequently to help breasts feel more comfortable

6. Working and Breastfeeding

- Baby can have all the benefits of breast milk even if you plan to go back to work or school
- When breastfeeding is well established, you can express milk and leave it with the caregiver for feedings throughout the day
- Breast milk can be stored in the refrigerator (3 days) or frozen (about 6 months). Refrigerate or freeze breast milk in clean bottles or bags and date them
- Warm up the breast milk by standing it in hot tap water before it is used. Microwaving or stove heating breast milk is not recommended
- Inquire about flexibility at work to have breastfeeding or pumping breaks

7. Breastfeeding and Pregnancy

- Exclusive breastfeeding (no food or liquids other than breast milk are given to baby) for the first 6 months of baby's life may delay the return of menstruation, but ovulation can still occur, so you should talk to your healthcare provider about birth control methods and options

8. Thoughtful Reminders

- Try to sleep when baby sleeps
- Do not ever sleep with baby in the bed with you
- Accept and/or ask for help with housework and meals
- Invite visitors only when you feel ready
- Eat healthy and drink plenty of fluids
- Remember that cigarette smoke is harmful to you and baby
- Alcohol and other drugs can pass into breast milk and may harm baby. Consult with a medical professional about any medications or substances you use or might use that could cause harm to baby

9. Talk to Others

- Keep communication open
- Connect with other breastfeeding mothers for support
- Discuss any concern you may have regarding breastfeeding
- Do something fun every day (relax in the bathtub, take a walk with baby, keep in touch with family and friends) – do not become isolated

10. Enjoy Your Baby

- Holding baby close stimulates many senses
- A baby who is smiled at, talked to, and cuddled will develop a sense of security
- Breastfeeding is more than simply providing nutrients and calories for physical growth – it contributes to an intimate and special relationship
- You and your baby have the right to breastfeed anywhere, anytime and there are many techniques to help achieve this comfortably
- Ask friends, family, healthcare providers, nurses, lactation consultants, and/or attend a breastfeeding support group to make it all come together. Breastfeeding is best for you and your baby!

For more information about breastfeeding visit: adph.org/perinatal