

Feeding your Baby, from 2 weeks to 6 months

From birth to 6 months, The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends “exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life. Exclusive breastfeeding is defined as ...no supplementation of any type (no water, no juice, no nonhuman milk [formula], and no foods).”

“**Infants weaned before 12 months** of age should not receive cow’s milk but should receive **iron-fortified infant formula.**”

HOW OFTEN TO FEED

Young babies need to eat often and at least 8-12 times in a 24-hour day.

Sometimes babies will go **three hours between feeds**. Other times, especially in the evening, they may want to eat every hour. Watch for **hunger cues, like “rooting”, sucking on their hands, tongue thrusts.**

Older babies generally feed less frequently, perhaps every 3-4 hours. By six months, most babies no longer need to eat overnight, but many may still like to do so. If baby is eating plenty during the day, and gaining weight well, then parents can decide whether overnight feedings are working for them or not.

HOW MUCH TO FEED

Breastfeeding babies should feed until they show full cues (falling asleep or stop nursing). Make sure they nurse well on the first side (usually at least 10 minutes), then offer the second side for as long as they want.

Bottle-feeding babies may follow a basic guideline of needing 2-2.5 oz per pound that they weigh within every 24-hour period. For example, a ten-pound baby would need ~20-25 ounces total in a 24-hour day, which is 3 ounces per feeding if you feed 8 times a day.

HOW TO KNOW YOUR BABY IS GETTING PLENTY

From 1 week to 2 months, you should change 6-10 diapers each day. For a breastfed baby, at least 3 of these should contain poop. A formula fed baby may poop only twice per day.

BREASTFEEDING TIPS

Here are some tips to help get breastfeeding going well:

- ♦ **Make sure you’ve got a good latch every time. Search online** for “video asymmetric latch” to see some helpful videos. Or have a lactation consultant check your baby’s latch (see below).
- ♦ Some people experience sore nipples in the early days. The best way to reduce that is through a good latch while nursing. Some discomfort in the first 30-60 seconds of a feed is normal. Discomfort with nursing should be gone by the time baby is about 4 weeks. If it’s not, or if there is any damage to your nipple, get help from an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant.
- ♦ Protect sensitive nipples from friction or dryness. Some soaps can dry out nipples.
- ♦ After a feed, you can rub extra milk around the nipple. Some people use a topical emollient in the early days.
- ♦ If you use nursing pads for leaking, change them when they get wet.
- ♦ Stay hydrated. Eat healthy foods. Rest when you can!

GOOD MILK PRODUCTION

- ♦ The most important thing for good milk production is frequency of feeds. Feed your baby at least 8–12 (or more) times per day.
- ♦ **Don’t limit time at the breast. Feed till your baby is full.** This is usually at least 10 minutes, but more is okay.
- ♦ Spend time skin-to-skin. Dress baby in a diaper only, against your bare skin, cover with a blanket to baby’s shoulders if needed.
- ♦ Take care of yourself: rest, eat well, drink, relax/reduce stress, ask for help with tasks.
- ♦ Unless medically necessary, avoid supplemental bottles of formula. These can lead to nursing less often, which reduces milk production.
- ♦ If you’re concerned about your milk production, reach out to an IBCLC – lactation consultant.

Pumping: You can choose to pump to give baby a bottle, increase milk production, or store for future use. Read your pump’s directions. Make sure you have clean hands and pump parts when you begin. Relax and use gentle breast massage while pumping.

Storing: You can store your milk in the pump bottle, or transfer it to another bottle or a milk storage bag. Milk will keep at room temperature for 4-8 hours. In the refrigerator for up to 8 days, or the freezer for up to 3-6 months.

If you’re having challenges, seek out help! The sooner, the better!

- ❖ Call a breastfeeding hotline at your hospital.
- ❖ Attend La Leche League (www.llli.org), Breastfeeding Drop-In Group (www.pugetsoundbreastfeeding.com) or Breastfeeding Support Group (<http://www.nurturingexpressions.com/classes>).
- ❖ Set up an appointment with an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC). Find one at uslca.org.

For more about breastfeeding, see: www.llli.com; www.breastfeeding.com.

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BOTTLE-FEEDING TIPS

Babies digest milk or formula better if it has been warmed, so whenever convenient, you should warm baby's bottle. To warm milk, simply fill a bowl with hot water, and place the bottle in the bowl for a few minutes. Or you can use a bottle warmer. Do not warm milk in the microwave.

Some breastfed babies resist when you try to introduce a bottle. Here are some tips:

- ♦ Have someone other than mom offer the bottle. If mom tries, baby may just want to nurse.
- ♦ Some babies are more likely to take a bottle when they're very hungry and a little desperate.
- ♦ Other babies do best if you nurse first till they're mostly full and relaxed, then try the bottle.
- ♦ Try different positions – some babies want to be held just like they're breastfeeding; others may prefer to be held upright, facing outward. Some babies like to be walked while they eat.
- ♦ Choose a bottle with a nipple shaped like the breast, or like a pacifier your baby takes. Try different brands of bottles. But only within limits! If they didn't like bottle #1 or #2, then #3 may be the one they'll take. But, if they've rejected 4 or more bottles, then buying more is a waste of money... they just don't like bottles at this time. If you can, wait a week or so, then try again.
- ♦ You can try feeding from a small cup. Hold the cup near baby's lips, and tilt it so the liquid is at the edge, and let baby lap it up with his or her tongue.
- ♦ Don't prop a bottle up in baby's mouth and walk away. Baby could choke.

FORMULA FEEDING

Look for generic formula – it is less expensive, but similar quality to name-brand formulas that advertise extensively. In general, it is better to use a formula made from cow's milk than to use a formula made from soy milk. Always follow the instructions on the can for how to mix the formula. For more on formula: www.infantformula.org/faqs

FEEDING BABY AFTER 6 MONTHS

The AAP recommends: "Complementary foods rich in iron should be introduced gradually beginning around 6 months of age." Introducing other foods before 6 months does not increase baby's growth (or help him sleep), it only "substitutes foods that lack the protective components of human milk."

"Breastfeeding should be continued for at least the first year of life and beyond for as long as mutually desired by mother and child. There is no upper limit to the duration of breastfeeding..."