

Breastfeeding Is a Natural Process

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Q: WHY SHOULD I BREASTFEED MY BABY?

A: Breastfeeding is a natural physiological process. In certain cultures, there is no need to ask a pregnant lady if she is going to breast or bottle feed. It is assumed she will be breastfeeding because this is the natural thing to do and is best for mother and child.

The breast milk is produced on demand. The more the infant breastfeeds, more milk is produced. The human breast does not store large volumes of milk as cows do.

A common reason why many mothers quit breastfeeding is they assume the baby is not getting enough milk because they cannot see how much milk is being consumed. The stomach capacity of a newborn increases in resemblance with the increased volume of a new mother's colostrums/milk.

Q: HOW DO I KNOW IF MY BABY IS GETTING ENOUGH MILK?

A: You can tell if the baby is getting enough milk by keeping track of the number of wet napkins or diapers with urine and bowel movements (BM) and the following:

Day 1 (first 24 hours)	Voiding	BM
Day 1 (first 24 hours)	1	1 within 8 hours
Day 2	2	3
Day 3	5-6	3
Day 4	6 or more	3
Day 5	6 or more	3
Day 6	6 or more	3
Day 7	6 or more	3

The baby is content and gaining weight 2/3 to 1 oz. per day in the first three months.

The baby is passing clear or pale yellow urine.

The baby alternates wakeful alert periods with short sleep periods.

The baby is satisfied and content after feeding.

Your breasts feel soft after feeding your baby.

Q: HOW DO I KNOW IF MY BABY IS BREASTFEEDING CORRECTLY?

A: Observe your baby as he or she eats. Initially the baby's pattern is suck, suck, suck, swallow, lasting for 30 seconds. Once the letdown reflex occurs, the pattern changes and is described as gulping, one swallow, one deep breath, one swallow, one deep breath, lasting for two to four minutes. This is normal. Do not panic. You will be able to tell when letdown reflex has occurred.

Your milk supply will be established during the first few days after the birth of your baby. Frequent comfortable feeding will maintain your milk supply.

Q: WHY IS BREAST MILK BETTER THAN COW'S MILK FOR MY BABY?

- A:**
1. It is free from contaminants.
 2. It provides the infant antibodies to protect from infection until their immune system is fully developed.
 3. It is readily absorbed.
 4. It decreases allergy and intolerance of cow's milk.
 5. It decreases the incidence of colic, ear infections, respiratory infections, asthma, urinary tract infections, eczema, lymphoma, and much more.
 6. Breastfed babies have been noted to develop visual acuity earlier, are more assertive, secure, mature, and developmentally advanced.
 7. Less incidence of SIDS.
 8. Less likely to become obese.
 9. If done exclusively, breast milk can support optimal growth and development for approximately six months of life, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Q: DOES BREASTFEEDING BENEFIT THE MOTHER? YES.

- A:**
1. - Less bleeding.
 2. - Less anemia.
 3. - Decreased ovarian cancer risk.
 4. - Decreased breast cancer risk.
 5. - Weight loss.
 6. - Risk of osteoporosis is less.

7. - Ovulation is delayed favoring spacing of children.
8. - A profound sense that she did something special for her baby and an intense bonding between mother and child.

The following organizations Web sites are helpful breastfeeding resources:

- American Academy of Pediatrics: www.aap.org/healthtopics/breastfeeding.cfm
- La Leche League International Inc.: www.lalecheleague.org
- March of Dimes: www.marchofdimes.com
- US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding

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