

Common Questions About Breastfeeding



Here are answers to some questions new mothers often ask.

Is my baby getting enough milk?

When it comes to feeding your baby, what goes in must come out. You can tell how much milk your baby is getting by keeping track of the baby's diapers:

- By the first 24 hours after birth: The baby should have 1 to 2 wet diapers and 1 to 2 soiled (poopy) diapers. The poop will be dark, sticky, and tar-like (meconium).
- The second and third day after birth: The baby should have 3 to 4 wet diapers and 2 to 3 soiled diapers. The poop will be greenish brown (transitional stool).
- After the first 4 or 5 days: The baby should have at least 5 to 6 wet diapers and at least 3 to 4 soiled diapers a day. The poop will be yellow and loose.

How can I tell when my baby's hungry?

Don't wait until your baby cries to feed them. Newborns should be nursed as soon as they show any hunger signs. These include:

- Movement when waking
- Increased alertness or activity
- Nuzzling against your breast (rooting reflex)
- Smacking lips or opening and closing their mouth
- Moving hands to mouth, sucking on the hand or fingers
- Crying (late sign)

How often should I feed my baby?

Feed your baby as often and as long as they want. Make sure you're nursing at least 8 to 12 times per day. Some of these feedings might be close together (cluster feeding), and then your baby might rest for several hours. Let your baby nurse as long as they would like. When done, they will stop swallowing, relax their hands, and fall asleep.

If your baby hasn't nursed in 4 hours, you may need to wake your baby and offer your milk. Newborns tend to be very sleepy and sometimes will not wake to eat. If your baby doesn't seem interested in nursing, place them in just a diaper against your bare skin (skin to skin) and continue to offer your milk.

If your baby fusses when feeding, don't worry. Some babies get distracted easily. To calm your baby, choose a quiet place for feeding. It may also help if you breastfeed in the same place in your home each time. If your baby is crying, it may be difficult for them to latch on. Gently place your finger in the mouth to help them feel calm, and then offer your milk again.

Will I spoil my baby?

Newborns can't be spoiled. When your baby needs comfort, food, or holding, their crying will let you know. When you respond to your baby's needs, you help them learn to trust you. This is a time to shower your baby with love and attend to their needs.

Why is my baby so hungry?

Babies eat a lot. Their stomachs are very small when they are born, and mother's milk is easily and quickly digested. This is even truer during a growth spurt. Growth spurts usually happen around 2 and 6 weeks of age. They happen again at 3 and 6 months. During these times, your baby will breastfeed more often. Don't be alarmed. Your baby will not need formula or supplements. You will make all the milk that your baby needs because milk production is a "supply and demand" situation. This means your baby's demand will increase your milk supply.

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