

## **BREASTFEEDING YOUR NEWBORN – Common Questions**

### **What can I eat and drink to help me make more milk?**

How much milk you make depends on how often milk is removed from your breasts by baby or pump: milk left in the breast after a feeding slows down milk production; if your breasts are empty they will speed up production. What a mother eats will determine how well she feels but will have no significant effect on her supply.

### **How much nipple pain is normal?**

Nipples may be sensitive in the first week due to hormonal changes and all this new activity at the breast. There should be no visible damage and no sharp pain at latch.

### **How long will it take my baby to finish a feed?**

How fast your baby feeds depends on how full your breasts are and how effective your baby is (a full-term, good weight infant likely will be more efficient than an early, lower weight infant). Range is ten to forty minutes.

### **One or both breasts?**

Please keep feeding your baby until they push away from the breast, content. If you have a high supply then one breast might be enough. With a more typical supply your baby will likely take both breasts, and even both breasts twice! Keep your baby swallowing by compressing your breast to increase the flow, as needed, and switching breasts when swallows slow down.

### **Why is my baby lazy at breast? He falls asleep then wakes as soon as I put him down.**

It's the flow of your milk that keeps your baby active at breast. Observe your baby's swallowing pattern (do not watch the clock!). If your baby is mostly suckling, not swallowing, they will eventually fall asleep but will not be full, waking up quickly to feed again.

### **How do I prevent my baby from getting their hands in the way when I try to latch?**

This reflexive movement of the hands to the mouth will gradually disappear but is strong at birth. As soon as baby's face touches your breast baby will stop this movement and focus on finding the nipple. If there is even the tiniest gap between their face and your breast then that hand-to-mouth movement will resume.

### **How do I know my baby is swallowing?**

Most new parents are unfamiliar with the difference between a baby suckling (trying to feed) and swallowing (actually drinking milk). Here's an excellent video to help you:

<https://globalhealthmedia.org/portfolio-items/is-your-baby-getting-enough-milk/>

### **Is my baby using me as a pacifier? Sucking just for comfort?**

Every time your newborn is interested in sucking they are hungry. A baby certainly is comforted while feeding at breast but will not seek the breast "just for comfort". Offer your breast in response to all hunger signals to help you have an excellent milk supply now and in the future. It's fine to use a pacifier when your baby is fussing but you cannot at that moment feed them, e.g. they're in a car seat or having a diaper change.

**How soon can I give a bottle?**

A carefully-given bottle will not undermine breastfeeding, even if given in the first week. In general babies much prefer breast to bottle and this preference may show in their second month (when feeding is no longer purely instinctive) with bottle refusal! Refusing the breast and preferring the bottle may happen if mother's supply is low such that many of the feeds are supplemented with a bottle. This is appropriately called "flow preference". A good supply is the key to long-term successful breastfeeding.

**I'm getting conflicting advice- how do I know what to do?**

The number one complaint from new parents is conflicting breastfeeding advice. How can you swiftly sort out the good from the not-so-good ideas? Picture yourself living a thousand years ago and ask yourself whether the advice you just received would make any sense.

**What if my baby does not burp after a feed?**

Sometimes they don't, and that's ok. Keep your baby upright for about ten minutes at the end of a feed, patting gently.

**I hear a baby always gets more milk out of the breast than a pump. Is that true?**

If you are having supply or latch problems, or have an early or small infant, a good retail or rental pump will likely be more effective than your baby. The pump never goes to sleep and always has a good "latch". Today's pumps are amazingly effective unlike earlier generations.

**I thought breastfeeding would be natural. Why does it feel so difficult?**

Breasts are designed to feed babies so be optimistic that all will work out just fine. However, it is common to have some challenges in the early weeks as you and your baby learn together. Please don't hesitate to get some help if you are struggling. The first six weeks may be hard but then comes the "reward": a lovely, easy breastfeeding relationship.

***In brief –*****How do newborns operate?**

By instinct. There is no thought (as we would know it) in the first month. Your newborn's feeding responses are reflexive and triggered by touch. For example, if your baby's chin touches your breast they will open wide. If your nipple touches their palate they will latch onto your breast. If milk lands on the back of their tongue they will swallow and continue to feed.

**How do breasts operate?**

In the first week milk comes in under hormonal control. Within 72 hours of delivery of the placenta you will notice a jump from colostrum to copious quantities of milk. From this point on the amount of milk you make is under local control – each breast makes milk according to the volume removed either by a pump or by the baby.