

# Baby's First Food

# Breastfeeding

- Breastfeeding is one of the best things you can do for you and baby.
- Breastfeeding may continue for 2 years and beyond.
- Pediatricians recommend breastmilk as the only food or drink for baby during the first 6 months. Feeding baby only water, juice, sugar water, formula or solids is not necessary.
- Breastfed babies need vitamin D drops. Talk to your health care provider\* for more information.
- Breastfeed whenever baby is hungry. Common signs of hunger include sucking, smacking lips, searching with an open mouth, putting fist in the mouth or crying. Baby may breastfeed more often when the weather is hot or during a growth spurt. Growth spurts usually occur when baby is 2-3 weeks, 6 weeks and 3 months old.
- The number of feedings baby needs in a day varies but most babies feed at least 8-12 times in 24 hours during the first months.
- Most babies will "cluster" feed (several feeds in a short time).
- Let baby guide the length and frequency of the feeding. This means feed baby until baby lets go of your breast in a relaxed manner or swallows become few and far between.
- Let baby feed on the first breast, then burp baby and offer the second breast. If baby only feeds from one breast during a feeding, start the next feeding with the other breast.

**SPEAK TO YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER\*  
FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT DIFFERENT WAYS  
TO HOLD YOUR BABY WHILE BREASTFEEDING.**

To ensure baby is feeding well, baby must be well "latched." Signs baby is well latched are:

- Baby's mouth is wide open to take the breast.
- Baby's nose and chin are touching the breast.
- Baby sucks slowly and you feel a gentle tug on the breast.
- You can hear baby swallow. Once your milk starts to flow, you can hear baby swallow with each suck.
- Your breasts should not hurt.



\*Health Care Provider refers to your physician, community health nurse, registered nutritionist, registered dietitian, lactation consultant or midwife.

## Signs your newborn baby is breastfeeding well are:

- 👉 During the first weeks, your breasts feel full before you feed and soften after nursing. After a few weeks you may not notice the full feeling ... don't worry, this does not mean you are not producing enough milk.
- 👉 Baby is feeding 8-12 times in 24 hours.
- 👉 Baby gains 5-7 ounces (140-200 gms) per week until 3 months of age.
- 👉 Baby may lose a small amount of weight after birth but will regain birth weight by 2 weeks of age.
- 👉 The number of wet diapers and bowel movements baby may have, as shown below.

## What to expect of a breastfed baby

Age	Number of wet diapers	Number and type of bowel movements (poop)
Birth - 1 day	At least 1	At least 1 Dark green, almost black and sticky
1 - 2 days	1 to 2 each day	At least 2 each day Green to yellow-green in colour
2 - 3 days	3 or more each day	At least 2 each day Lighter in colour, more yellow, soft, may look like little seeds
3 - 6 days	4 to 5 heavy wet diapers each day (urine is pale with no odour)	At least 2 to 3 each day Soft, small, yellow, may look like little seeds
After 6 days	At least 6 heavy wet diapers each day (urine is pale with no odour)	At least 2 each day Yellow, soft, may look like little seeds
After 1 month	At least 6 - 8 wet diapers each day (urine is pale with no odour)	May have fewer bowel movements and can vary. Baby may poop once a day or baby may not poop for several days. See note at bottom of this chart. Mustard yellow, loose

Note: If the bowel movement is hard, dark-coloured or difficult to pass, baby may be constipated - call your health care provider.\*

## If you would like to express and store your breastmilk:

Use your hands or a breast pump to express breast milk. If possible, wait until breastfeeding is well established (4 - 6 weeks after birth) before you give baby expressed breast milk in a bottle. Ask your health care provider\* for advice.

## To store breastmilk:

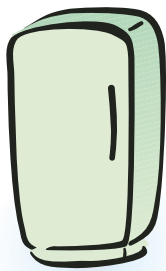
- 👉 Freeze milk in 2 to 4-ounce (60-120ml) quantities so it is easy to thaw and warm quickly.
- 👉 Use a sterilized container.

**To sterilize:** Place container in a pot of water. The water should completely cover the container. Cover the pot and bring water to a boil. Continue boiling for 2 minutes. Let cool and remove container with sterilized tongs.

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- You can also use milk storage bags, or freezer milk bags specially designed for freezing and storing breast milk.
- If you are using bottle liners - use double bags to avoid tearing. Squeeze the air out at the top, roll down the bag to about 1 inch (2.5 cm) above the milk, close the bag and seal it, using a twist tie.
- Label milk with the day, month and year. **ALWAYS** use the oldest milk first.
- Refrigerate freshly expressed breast milk for up to 48 hours.
- You can freeze freshly expressed breast milk. The length of time breast milk can be frozen depends on the type of freezer used. (See below)

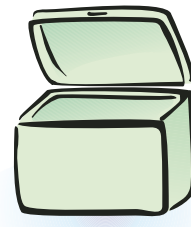
Research varies as to proper storage time for expressed breast milk. For the health and safety of your infant, Alberta Health and Wellness has chosen to recommend shorter storage periods for expressed breast milk.



Freezer inside the fridge - store breast milk up to 2 weeks.



Separate freezer on the fridge - store breast milk up to 2-3 months.



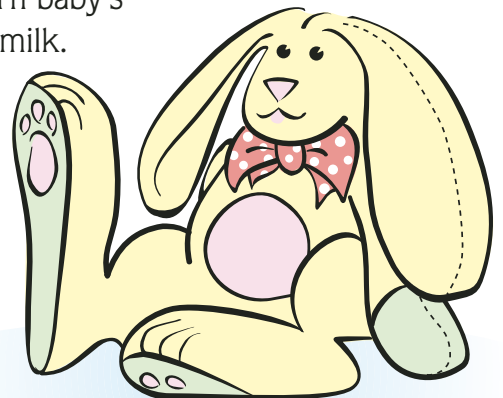
Deep freezer - store breast milk up to 6 months.

### To thaw breast milk:

- Place frozen milk under cool running water until thawed, or thaw frozen milk in the fridge several hours before it is needed.
  - Previously frozen breast milk should not be refrozen.
  - Thawed breast milk should be refrigerated and used within 24 hours. **THROW OUT** any unfinished breast milk.
  - Frozen milk can separate when thawed so shake the container gently to mix the milk.
- To warm breast milk, place container in a bowl of warm water. Avoid heating breast milk in the microwave because it can cause "hot spots" that may burn baby's mouth. Microwaving destroys important nutrients in breast milk.

### Get help with breastfeeding when:

- Breastfeeding hurts.
- Your nipples are sore or cracked.
- Your breasts are sore and you have flu-like symptoms.
- You have lumps or reddened areas on your breast(s).
- You have trouble getting baby to latch or stay latched.
- You do not hear baby swallow milk.
- Baby's sucking is rapid, shallow or like nibbling, for the whole feeding.
- Baby has dark green, almost black bowel movements (poop) after 5 days of age.
- Baby has fewer than 3 wet diapers after 3 days of age.
- Baby is very sleepy at the breast or difficult to wake up for feedings.
- Baby is not feeding at least 8 times in 24 hours during the first 3 weeks.



## Take care of yourself:

- Eat a variety of foods from Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating - Calcium-rich foods such as milk products (milk, cheese and yogurt); vegetables and fruit; bread, cereals and grain products; meat and alternatives and other foods.
- Snack throughout the day.
- Drink plenty of fluids like milk, water and juice.
- If you think you are eating a food that causes problems for baby, talk to your health care provider\*.
- Do not diet.
- Limit caffeine-containing foods such as coffee, tea, chocolate or soft drinks. Caffeine passes into breast milk and can keep baby awake.

## When can I offer homogenized (homo/whole) milk to baby?

- You can offer baby homogenized (homo/whole) milk between **9 and 12 months** of age.
- Homo milk does not contain iron. Iron is important for babies to be healthy. Before switching baby to homo milk be sure baby is eating foods from Canada Food Guide to Healthy Eating, including foods that contain iron. (For example, around 1/2 cup or 125 ml of dry infant cereal daily).



**ALCOHOL,  
DRUGS,  
SMOKING AND  
MEDICATIONS  
CAN  
AFFECT YOUR  
BREAST MILK.  
IF YOU USE ANY OF  
THESE, TALK TO YOUR  
HEALTH CARE PROVIDER\*  
ABOUT BREASTFEEDING SAFELY.**

## Can I use other milks or vegetarian beverages for baby?

- Skim, 1% and 2% milk do not provide enough fat for baby to grow in the first 2 years.
- Soy beverages or rice beverages should not be used because they may not contain enough protein, fat, or calories to help baby grow.
- Coffee whitener is not suitable for baby and should never be given to baby. It does not contain the nutrients baby needs.

### For more information or help with breastfeeding:

Local Health Region Office:

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Breastfeeding Support Group:

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Lactation Consultant:

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Other:

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Thank you to the registered dietitians, public health nurses, pediatricians, community nutritionists, community support workers and consumers in Manitoba who developed this resource and provided Alberta Health and Wellness permission to adapt and reproduce this resource.

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