

The Benefits of Breastfeeding

- Mom's milk has the perfect amounts of nutrients that a baby needs. As the baby grows, these amounts change.
- Breastfed babies have less illness and allergies, and their brains develop faster than formula fed babies.
- Breast milk is easy to digest, so babies have less constipation, spitting up and tummy aches.
- Breastfeeding is convenient. It's always the right temperature, is immediately available, and comes in an attractive container.
- Nursing can help the mom to lose weight faster.
- Breastfeeding helps mom to relax.
- Breastfeeding saves money!

What to Expect

Babies' breastfeed often, every 1 ½ to 3 hours (8-12 times per day). They will want to nurse more often when they are younger and when going through a growth spurt. Growth spurts are common around 2-3 weeks, 6 weeks, 2-3 months and 4-6 months.

Great Jobs for "Breastfeeding Dads"

Nap Coach

Make it your job to rock, walk, sing or cuddle the baby to sleep. The low tone of a male voice is very soothing.

Bath Time

Babies thrive on touch, eye contact and conversation. Do all 3 at bath time. Dad's big hands make them feel secure.

Tour Guide

Babies need visual stimulation. Give him the grand tour of your house, the yard, or the neighborhood. Talk about what you see.

Midnight Express

If your baby sleeps in a different room from you, make it your job to bring the baby to mom to nurse. If you share the job (you deliver, she returns) neither of you misses much sleep. Consider sharing your bed with the baby to save you both from getting up.

Burp Buddy

Burping makes babies feel better. It doesn't take long to learn that dad makes them feel better.

Supporting Mom

Learn about Breastfeeding. Take a breastfeeding class with your partner before the baby is born. Read books. Ask questions.

Be patient while mom and baby learn to breastfeed. Both of them are getting to know each other, and learning something new. Newborns often do not feed very well for the first few days because they are tired or not hungry.

Help around the house. Do the dishes or laundry. Cook dinner. Answer the phone.

Understand changes in emotions. These are times of change: Physical changes, hormones, sleep deprivation, finances, and relationships all play a role in the first few months with a new baby.

Be a breastfeeding advocate. When dads support breastfeeding, it is more successful and lasts longer.

Know who to call for extra help. Call the WIC program or the Lactation Consultant at the hospital when you have questions about breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding and Sex

Hormonal changes take place in a woman's body after birth and while breastfeeding. She may temporarily lose interest in sex. The vagina becomes less slippery and intercourse may be uncomfortable. Some women may feel differently than they used to about having their breasts touched during intercourse. It is common for her milk to leak during sex.

Discuss birth control before resuming intercourse. Breastfeeding does not prevent pregnancy for most women. Some birth control pills and shots can decrease a woman's breast milk supply. Talk to her doctor about the options.

