

TEN TIPS FOR BREASTFEEDING



- 1 Health benefits for the baby:** When a virus enters the house, the mother's immune system produces antibodies against that virus; the antibodies get into her blood stream, the antibodies get into her milk, the baby gets the antibodies, and the baby is protected. The amino acid pattern, the amount of fat, the carbohydrates, and the antibodies in a mom's milk all protect a baby.
- 2 Health benefits for the mother:** Every year a woman breastfeeds, she reduces her chance of breast cancer by 4.3% and with every baby she nurses, she has another reduction of 7%. Metabolically speaking, breastfeeding resets the mother for her lifetime reaction to stress.
- 3 Establish breastfeeding early:** Keeping the newborn with the mother at birth helps establish breastfeeding; when the baby is put on the mother's abdomen, skin to skin, it takes an average of 90 minutes to 2 hours for the baby to instinctually move towards the breast and latch; give your baby the best chance at breastfeeding by keeping your baby with you after birth.
- 4 How long to breastfeed:** The World Health Organization recommends breastfeeding up to 6 months of age, with continued breastfeeding along with appropriate complementary foods up to two years of age or beyond. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusively breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life, and then adding in solids and continuing to breastfeed until at least 12 months of age. Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for your infant, so breastfeed as long as a mother and baby desire.
- 5 Introducing a bottle of pumped breast milk:** A good time to introduce the bottle is around 3 or 4 weeks of age, because if you wait too long, your baby may not take it. Getting your baby used to the bottle allows flexibility so you can breastfeed your baby longer and lets your partner and other care-givers be involved with feeding the baby.
- 6 Understanding a nursing strike:** Nursing strikes can occur in the younger infant and may be misconstrued by the new mother as the baby losing interest in nursing. Temporary breast refusal might be caused by an ear infection, stuffy nose, to many replacement feed bottles or too many pacifiers in use.
- 7 How to tell if my baby is getting enough milk:** *Observe your baby-* is he content after a feed, do you hear audible swallowing, are there 6-8 clear, heavy, wet diapers? *Observe your breasts after a feeding-* are your breasts softer after breastfeeding? *Weigh your baby-* rent or buy a scale and measure your baby's weight gain. If you are concerned see a lactation consultant, try pumping to increase supply, and explore natural supplements such as Fenugreek.
- 8 Common breast milk allergens:** Abdominal discomfort, gas, and crying after feeding might be due to allergens in breast milk. Try eliminating the following foods from the mother's diet: dairy, eggs, wheat, corn, and soy.

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9 Legal rights for pumping: There is a Federal law that requires every company with more than 50 employees to allow women to take reasonable break times to pump breast milk in a clean environment that is not the bathroom. Half of the 52 states have laws that provide the same protections for breast feeding mothers in smaller companies. Ask Human Resources what your protections are before returning to work.

10 The breastfeeding working mother: If the baby overfeeds during a working mother's absence, the baby can reject the breast upon her return. If the baby shortens his feeds on the breast, the mother will see less pumped milk when she is away. Formula supplementation very quickly follows, and the breastfeeding can be lost.

The following expert interviews contributed to this "Ten Tips for Breastfeeding": Corky Harvey, MS, RN, IBCLC, Cynthia Epps, MS, IBCLC, Jennifer Davidson, RN, BSC, IBCLC, Jay Gordon, MD, FAAP, Lisa Pierson Weinberger, JD, and Tanya Altmann, MD.