

Fact Sheet

FACT SHEET 2.
(CHS_FS_GNA_002)

GETTING STARTED WITH BREASTFEEDING (1)

Here are some commonly asked questions and answers.

When do I start breastfeeding?

Breastfeed your baby as soon as possible after birth as most babies are alert and have a strong desire to suck. Your body will have already produced colostrum (baby's first milk), which is perfect for your newborn baby.

How does my body produce milk?

During pregnancy, your body begins to produce colostrum, a thick, rich, yellowish fluid. As you breastfeed more, the colostrum decreases and your breast milk increases. Breast milk is NEVER TOO RICH OR TOO WEAK. It may look pale blue in colour, as it changes to suit your baby's needs, but it has all the nourishment necessary.

When your baby starts sucking, you MAY feel a tingling or tightening sensation in your breasts. This feeling, known as 'let down' occurs at other times to (eg. when you hear your baby cry). Not all mothers experience this.

What do I need to help me to breastfeed?

While your body has prepared itself for breastfeeding during pregnancy, there are a number of things you can do which will help, especially in the early months.

- Obtain breastfeeding information during pregnancy.
- Join a breastfeeding support group.
- Enjoy a variety of foods, in particular wholegrain breads and cereals, fruit, vegetables and some dairy foods.
- No specific food has been proven to upset babies or cause 'wind'. All foods in moderation.
- Try to sleep or rest when your baby is asleep.
- Accept offers of help with housework and meals from your partner, family and friends.
- Do only essential housework.
- Drink fluids to satisfy your thirst. A good idea is to have a small drink of water every time your baby feeds.
- Avoid smoking, alcohol, caffeine rich products and other drugs. These pass to your baby through your breast milk. If you need to take medication, ask your doctor to prescribe medication that is safe while breastfeeding.
- Make some time for yourself so that you can relax.
- Take the phone off the hook or put limits on visitors and phone calls (this will leave you time to catch up).

Source: Breastfeeding booklet compiled by the Community Child Health Service of the Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District.

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