



Common breastfeeding concerns

When do I stop breastfeeding?

Remember...

- Breastfeeding gives your baby all the nutrients they need for the first six months.
- Try to breastfeed your baby for at least 12 months, and for as long after that as you both wish.
- If your baby bites you, temporarily remove them from the breast.
- Feed your older baby in a quiet room to avoid distractions.
- If your baby refuses the breast, try to find out why or contact a health professional.
- Wean your baby gradually.

Breastmilk gives your baby all the nutrients she/he needs for around the first six months of life. After this time babies need solid food in addition to breastmilk. Queensland Health, the National Health and Medical Research Council and the World Health Organisation all recommend that you continue breastfeeding until your baby is 12 months old and for as long after that suits both you and your baby.

As your baby gets older, you may experience the following concerns. Here are some tips to help you to keep breastfeeding:

Low supply

Check that you are feeding your baby on demand. The more you feed, the more milk you will make. Read the *Is my baby getting enough milk?* fact sheet for more information. The full set of fact sheets can be found on the website listed at the bottom of this page.

Teeth

Teeth may initially make the feed feel different but should not cause any discomfort. Biting may occur at this stage when your baby is getting used to and testing out her or his new teeth. When this occurs, temporarily remove your baby from the breast and return them when they are ready to feed. Your baby will soon learn not to bite at feeding time.

Distractions

As your baby gets older and more interested in and aware of the world around it, he or she may frequently come off during a feed to have a look around. You may need to feed in a quiet room with fewer distractions.

Breast refusal

Babies can sometimes refuse the breast – this can be one-off or repeated and is most often temporary. Causes can be baby related (eg. a cold, distractions, teething) or mother related (eg. hormonal changes, medications, change in perfume). Try to find and deal with the underlying problem. If refusal continues, contact an ABA counsellor, lactation consultant or breastfeeding trained professional.

Return of menstrual cycle

You may notice that your baby is a bit fussier with feeding, however this will pass after the first few days of your cycle.

Weaning

- Wean gradually – over several weeks or months, depending on your comfort and your baby's acceptance.
- Be led by your baby and start by weaning the feed they are least interested in.
- If your baby is six months or younger, replace missed feeds with infant formula or expressed breastmilk or donor milk. If your baby is older, the foods or drinks you could replace feeds with depends on your baby's age. Refer to the *Introducing solids* fact sheets for different age groups.
- You can wean from the breast to a cup or a bottle.
- If your breasts become engorged, try to resist expressing milk as you do not want your supply to increase. Express just a little for comfort and to reduce the risk of mastitis.

Acknowledgements

This fact sheet is consistent with current Infant Feeding Guidelines and Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia, as produced by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

It is also based on information drawn heavily from:

- Infant and Toddler Feeding Guide, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District, 2004.
- Breastfeeding: A Simple Guide to Help You Establish Breastfeeding, Community Child Health Service, Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District, 2004.
- Growing Strong: Feeding You and Your Baby, Public Health Services, Queensland Health, 2003.
- Optimal Infant Nutrition: Evidence Based Guidelines 2003-2008, Queensland Health, 2003.

This fact sheet is also the result of input and effort from many health professionals in Queensland. Their help with the content is greatly appreciated.

To access the full set of fact sheets, go to <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/child&youth/factsheets>.

