

Learning to breastfeed

- Congratulations on the birth of your baby.
- Your midwife is here to help you learn how to breastfeed. Ask for help if you need it.
- Here are some photos and tips about how to attach your baby to your breast.
- Help with breastfeeding is also available after you go home. Ask your midwife for more information.



Positioning your baby

- Sit so you are comfortable.
- Unwrap and hold your baby close to your body.
- Baby should be facing the breast, chest to chest.
- Hold your baby's whole body with your lower arm.
- Keep baby's shoulders and back in a straight line so their neck is not twisted.
- Hold your baby's shoulders, not their head.



Preparing to attach your baby

- Position baby so they are on their side, close in with their nose opposite your nipple **“chest to chest”**.
- Position your fingers well back from the **areola (dark area)** so baby is able to take a big mouthful of the breast.
- Stroke your baby’s **lower lip** with the **lower edge of the areola** to encourage baby to open their mouth wide, keep the **nipple above the top lip** opposite the nose.



Bringing your baby to the breast

- Wait for a wide open gape (like yawning), then sweep your baby quickly to the breast – **“baby to breast”**.
- Your baby’s chin and lower lip should touch the breast first and the lower lip should touch the breast well down on the areola, **“chin to breast”**.
- Then the top lip brushes over the nipple as the baby attaches.



Signs that your baby is well attached

- Your baby's **mouth** is wide open and the lips are a long way away from each other.
- The **lower lip** is turned out.
- The **chin** is touching the breast (or nearly so).
- More **areola** is visible above the baby's top lip than below the bottom lip.



How your baby feeds at the breast

- Your baby will start feeding with short, fast sucks to help your milk to flow.
- Once your milk is flowing, your baby will feed with deeper, longer and stronger sucks. Your baby's whole jaw should be moving up and down when sucking.
- Your baby will pause briefly in between sucking bursts.
- After about 48 hours, you should hear and see your baby swallowing.
- Towards the end of the feed, sucking bursts become shorter and pauses become longer.
- Normally, your baby will let go of the breast when he/she has finished feeding.



How often and for how long should my baby feed?

- Many babies are sleepy in the first 24 - 48 hours. Some babies need to be woken for feeds – staff will tell you if this is needed.
- After this babies need around 8-10 feeds every 24 hours for the first few weeks.
- The length of feeds varies from baby to baby, and from day to day. Newborn babies may feed from a few minutes to around an hour.
- Some babies only need one side per feed and others need both so offer both breasts each feed unless you are advised differently.



How to hand express breastmilk

- Wash your hands then gently massage your breasts for a short time.
- Stimulate your nipples to encourage the milk to flow.
- With your hand under your breast, place your thumb and forefinger on either side of your areola (the dark area around the nipple). Keep your fingers well back from the nipple.
- Gently press your thumb and forefinger back into your breast, then press them towards each other, behind the nipple. Press for about 2 seconds then release.
- Continue to compress and release and your milk will begin to flow.
- When the flow stops move your fingers to another position around the edge of the areola and start again.
- When the flow slows to drops of milk change to the other breast. It is important not to cause pain or friction to your breasts while expressing.

