

# Breastfeed For a Healthier Child



Give your child a headstart in life


## Why breastfeed?

Breastfeeding will give your baby a headstart in life because breast milk will meet all his nutritional needs. It is the only food he needs from birth till about six months of age. Breastfeeding can be continued up to about two years of age if he does not suffer from any special medical condition.

## What are the advantages of breastfeeding for your baby?

- **Complete** nutrition. There is no need to introduce any other food till at least six months of age. The nutrition composition of breast milk is just right and changes to match the needs of your growing baby.

The milk composition also changes during a feed, becoming higher in fat towards the end of a feed, thus making the baby feel full and stop suckling. This reduces the likelihood of overfeeding your baby.

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- **Counters** risk of infection and reduces risks of some diseases. Colostrum, the early milk produced 2-3 days after birth by the breast, is especially high in antibodies. This helps your baby fight against infections such as diarrhoea and respiratory tract infections.

Breastfed babies are less prone to allergies, asthma, eczema, colic, constipation and sudden infant death syndrome. They have reduced risks of childhood obesity, some childhood cancers and malocclusions (malaligned teeth) compared with non-breastfed babies.

- **Comfort** and security as he feeds from your breast.
- **Cognitive** development. There is growing evidence to suggest that breastfeeding enhances your child's cognitive development. These cognitive developmental benefits increase with the duration of breastfeeding.

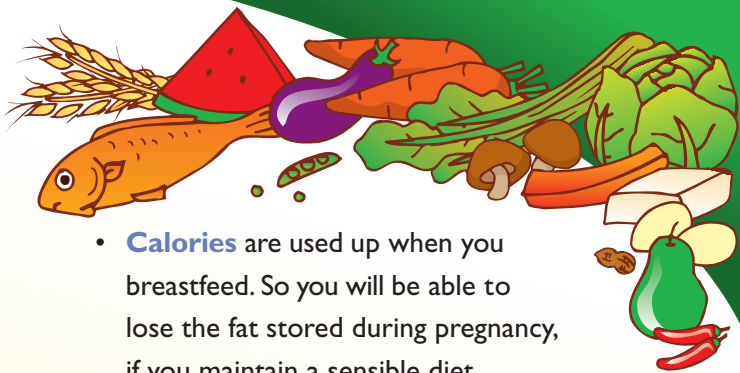
## What are the benefits of breastfeeding for you?

- **Convenience.** No need to sterilise bottles. Just wash your nipples with water once a day.
- **Cost saving.** You need not buy milk formulas.
- **Contraction** of the womb occurs when your baby suckles. This speeds up the contraction of the womb to its pre-pregnancy size.

- **Child spacing** if you breastfeed fully. Breastfeeding delays the return of menstruation and it may be used as a family planning method.

- **Cancers.** Breastfeeding may provide protection against breast cancer (especially during the pre-menopausal years) and ovarian cancer.





- **Calories** are used up when you breastfeed. So you will be able to lose the fat stored during pregnancy, if you maintain a sensible diet.

## How do I prepare myself for breastfeeding?

You should be prepared physically, mentally and emotionally.

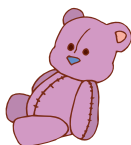
- **Physical preparation**
  - Maintain a well-balanced diet during pregnancy.
  - Have a breast examination to check if your nipples are suitable for breastfeeding.
  - Get a good support (maternity/nursing) bra by the seventh month of pregnancy.
  - Prepare your wardrobe for breastfeeding. Acquire loose blouses or t-shirts.

- **Mental & emotional preparation**

- Read materials on breastfeeding.
- Plan how long you are going to breastfeed.
- Attend a talk on breastfeeding with your husband.
- Win your husband's support for breastfeeding.
- Have a positive attitude, make up your mind to breastfeed and be confident that you will succeed.



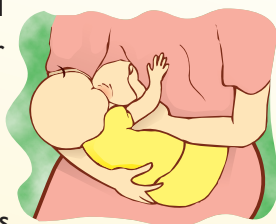
## How do I breastfeed?



1. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water. Clean your nipples and areola daily.

2. Sit or lie down comfortably. Do not slouch.

Hold your baby and bring him to your breast. Make sure his head is well-supported. There are various positions



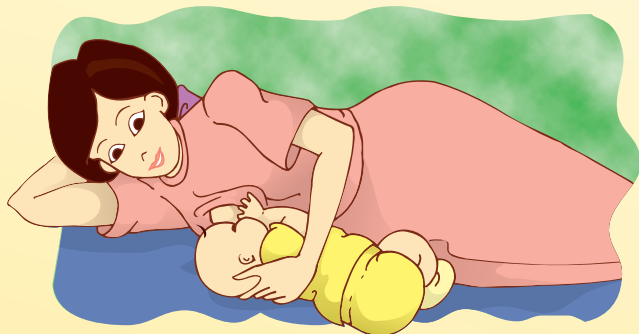
you can put your baby in.



Sitting straight up without any support at the back.



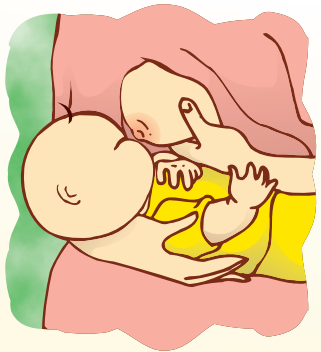
Leaning back against the sofa.



Lying down on one side.

3. Touch his cheek with your nipple and he should turn his head towards your breast.

Wait until the baby's mouth is opened wide, then pull him close to take as much of your areola in his mouth as



possible. If your baby is well positioned at the breast, his lips will be flattened and tongue cupped at the bottom of your nipple. His chin will touch the lower part of your breast. This is known as "latching on".

4. Let your baby suckle as long as possible on the breast. He should detach himself naturally from the breast when he is satisfied. If you need to detach him, just insert your smallest finger into his mouth and remove him gently from your breast.



5. There is no need to burp your baby unless he has been crying a lot.

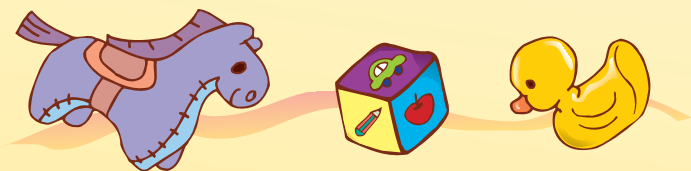
## Common questions on breastfeeding

**Q. Will I have enough milk?**

**A.** The amount of milk produced depends on how often you breastfeed and how relaxed you are. You can have enough breast milk if you do not supplement with formula and have adequate fluids, food and rest. Allow your baby to suckle frequently, especially in the initial stages of breastfeeding.

**Q. How do I know my baby is getting enough breast milk?**

**A.** A baby that has enough is contented and produces about six to eight wet nappies in 24 hours.



**Q. Will I suffer discomfort and pain if I breastfeed?**

**A.** Many new mothers go through the ordeal of breast engorgement a few days after their baby is born. The breasts are painful and swollen with milk that cannot flow out. By breastfeeding your baby soon after birth and frequently after that, engorgement can be minimised.

**Q. Can I work and breastfeed at the same time?**

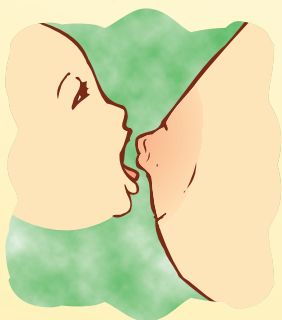
**A.** Many mothers have successfully combined working with breastfeeding. There are two options available when you go back to work:

- Total breastfeeding. Breastfeed your baby whenever you are at home. Express your milk at work and your nanny/babysitter can feed him your expressed breast milk.
- Partial/mixed breastfeeding. Breastfeed your baby when you are home and get your nanny/babysitter to formula feed when you are at work.



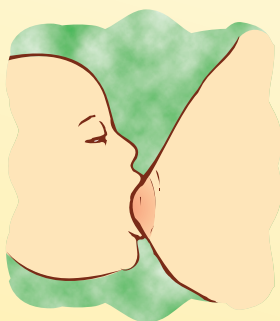
**Q. What if I get sore nipples?**

**A.** Apply some breast milk onto the sore nipples and allow to air-dry. It is not the length of time you breastfeed that causes sore nipples but the incorrect attachment at the breast. Vary the baby's position during feeding and check that the baby opens his mouth widely before attaching to the nipple.



◀ Wait for your baby's mouth to open wide

▶ A good mouthful, with more of the areola from underneath the nipple in the baby's mouth



**Q. Do I have to be on a 'special' diet?**

**A.** You do not need to be on a 'special' diet. Instead, eat a healthy, balanced diet consisting of a variety of food from the four food groups of the Healthy Diet Pyramid - rice and alternatives (such as bread, noodles and cereals), fruit, vegetables, as well as meat and alternatives (such as dairy foods, fish, beans and bean products). You should not go on a weight-reducing diet when breastfeeding. Lastly, remember to take plenty of drinks such as milk, fruit juices and plain water throughout the day.

**Q. I'm worried about jaundice.**

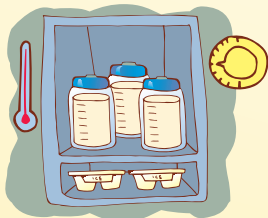
**A.** Jaundice is a common condition among newborns in Singapore. It is a yellow colouration of the skin caused by high concentrations of bilirubin. There are many causes of jaundice in the newborn, the most common being that the baby's liver is slightly immature and unable to metabolise all the bilirubin released when old red blood cells are broken down. Jaundiced babies should still continue to be breastfed.

There is insufficient scientific evidence to show that ginger, sesame oil or other traditional food causes jaundice. However, it would be wise to eat them in moderation.

**Q. How do I store and express breast milk?**

**A.** You can express your milk in three ways - using your own hands, a manual pump\* or an electric pump\*.

- Breast milk can be left at room temperature of 25°C for up to 4 hours, stored in a refrigerator for 48 hours, or frozen in a freezer for 3-6 months.



\* Sterilise all bottles and equipment thoroughly by soaking in sterilising fluid or by boiling after washing.

- Expressed breast milk can be transported in an ice-cooler box with ice cubes placed inside. The expressed milk should be placed in a refrigerator or freezer immediately upon reaching your destination.
- Thaw the milk by letting it stand in warm water or by running it under tap water for at least 10 minutes. Avoid boiling or heating the milk using the microwave oven.

**Q. How often should I breastfeed?**

- A.** There is no need for scheduled breastfeeding in the early weeks. Feed your baby whenever he cries, day and night. Once your milk flow is established, the baby will suckle less often.



**Q. Where can I get more information on breastfeeding?**

- A.**
- Call the Breastfeeding Mother's Support Group (Singapore) Hotline at 6339 3558 for advice. You can obtain the book 'Practical Hints on Breastfeeding' as well as other breastfeeding aids and information on talks from this support group.
  - Check with your doctor or nurse.
  - Call your nearest polyclinic and attend their antenatal talks if available.

