

General Information

During the first year of life, breast milk is best. It provides the right balance of nutrients that your baby needs for growth and development. Breast milk also contains antibodies and other substances that protect your newborn from some illnesses. If you discontinue nursing prior to the first year or you decide not to nurse, then infant formula is recommended because it is closest to breast milk in the nutrients your baby needs until his/her first birthday.

Cow's milk should not be used until a baby is one year old. It does not provide the nutrients your infant needs and it can be difficult to digest. In fact, intake of too much cow's milk even after one year of age can cause a severe anemia.

Feeding Times

In general, breast-fed babies need to be fed every 2-3 hours and will nurse for 10 to 20 minutes on each breast. Formula-fed infants will take a bottle every three to four hours. They will usually take two to four ounces initially, and gradually increase the amount they drink over the first few weeks of life. Your infant will set his/her own feeding schedule. Breast-fed infants especially should "feed on demand."

Is My Baby Getting Enough Breast Milk or Formula?

Signs of a well-fed baby include:

- Wetting six or more diapers in a day after four days of age
- Frequent stools
- Looking and acting satisfied after every feeding

Growth and weight gain are the best indicators of nourishment. In the first week of life your baby will lose some weight, but will then regain to birth weight usually by two weeks of age. We will monitor your baby's weight gain closely in the first weeks of life to assure adequate weight gain and also to help you with any questions or concerns you may have as well. Most babies double their birth weight by five months and triple it by one year of age.

Breastfeeding

During the first few days of life, you and your baby need to learn to nurse. Initially, a nutrient-rich substance called colostrum will come from your breasts. Although the volume of this substance is small, it's close to what your newborn's stomach can sustain. Two to three days after birth, your breasts will become firm and filled with milk. Nursing frequently in the first days of life helps stimulate milk production. Newborns will nurse eight or more times in 24 hours.

When you are nursing, make sure you are in a comfortable position and support your arms with a pillow or arm-rest. There are several different positions that you can place your baby in to nurse effectively,

and you will learn which position works best for you and your baby. Initially, use a different position at each nursing to help empty all milk ducts and prevent blocked ducts and mastitis. This also reduces soreness by distributing the area of most intense suction, which is the part of the areola under your baby's lower lip. Nurse from both breasts at each feeding, and begin your feedings on the breast that you ended your last feeding.

Make sure your baby is "latched-on" correctly. The baby should not be sucking on just the tip of the nipple, but a large portion of the colored tissue around the tip (the areola) should be in the baby's mouth. This can be accomplished by gently compressing your breast with your thumb and index finger and placing it in your infant's mouth. If your breast is engorged with milk, expressing some of the milk may help the nipple fit into your newborn's mouth comfortably. Remember to use your (recently washed) little finger to break the infant's suction prior to removing him or her from your breast. If the latch on is not correct, break the suction and reposition your baby to prevent nipple irritation.

Sore nipples can occur if your baby is not latched on correctly. If your nipples are sore, start nursing on the side that bothers you the least. Also, if you need to skip any feedings on either side secondary to sore nipples, then express milk by hand or with a pump to maintain your milk supply.

Maternal Diet While Nursing

As a nursing mother you will need more calories in your diet than you needed before pregnancy. Your daily food intake should include foods high in protein and calcium/Vitamin D. You may want to talk to your doctor about continuing your prenatal vitamins or other supplements for your diet as well. You will also need to assure your fluid intake is adequate. Every time you nurse, you should fill a large bottle with water to drink while you are nursing.

Certain foods in your diet can cause excess gas in your infant. These foods include onions, cabbage, broccoli, tomatoes, chocolate, caffeine and spicy foods. If your baby seems excessively gassy, review your diet for the last 24 hours and try to eliminate any foods previously mentioned to see if it helps. Please call us with any questions you have about this. Between one and two months of age it is a good idea to introduce pumped breast milk in a bottle several times per week both to allow Dad the enjoyment of feeding his child and to help your baby learn to take either breast or bottle in case you need to miss a feeding.

Vitamins for Your Newborn

Currently, we recommend a Vitamin D supplement for all exclusively nursing infants. One brand we recommend is called "Tri-vi-sol" which contains Vitamins A, C and D. If local tap water does not have fluoride, you may wish to start Tri-Vi-Flor (prescription needed) after 6 months of age. Philadelphia water contains fluoride. Most local suburban areas (AQUA water company) do not contain fluoride. Bottled water may or may not contain fluoride depending upon the natural mineral content in the area where the water originates.

Medications

Both prescription and over-the-counter medications can pass into breast milk. If your physicians would like to prescribe or recommend any medications, please let them know you are nursing.

Supplementing with Formula

Some breastfeeding Moms need or choose to supplement with bottle feedings of infant formula. Usually, we recommend that you wait until your breast milk supply is established prior to supplementing. This usually takes several weeks. If you do supplement with formula, we recommend that you pump or express your breast milk in order to maintain your milk supply. Please call us with any questions you have about supplementing.

Bottle Feeding and Infant Formula

Infant formula should be the only form of milk other than breast milk any child under one year of age receives. Infant Formula comes in three forms: Ready to Feed, Concentrate, and Powder. Concentrate and Powder need to be mixed with water. Please follow the directions carefully when mixing formula-do not add more or less water than is called for on the directions to the formula.

Initially, your infant will only take two to 4 ounces of formula at each feeding. Hold the bottle so that the nipple fills with milk and the baby does not suck too much air while drinking. If the baby takes in too much air, it may cause him/her to feel uncomfortable and gassy. Make sure you burp your baby when he's finished. You can also burp your infant twice-half way through his bottle and when he's done. When your baby empties the bottle and does not seem satisfied, you can add another ounce.

The nipple hole of the bottle should be large enough for the milk to drip though without forming a stream. If separate drops are not formed the hole may be too large. If the hole is too small, you can make it larger by pushing a sterilized needle though the hole.

Remember never to prop the bottle. Small infants can choke when left unattended with a propped bottle. In addition, feeding time is a special time during which your infant can bond with you. Infants need this special time of nurturing and closeness they receive by being held closely when feeding.