

WHY SHOULD I BREASTFEED MY BABY?

- Breast milk is the most complete form of nutrition for infants. Breast milk has just the right amount of fat, sugar, water, and protein that is needed for a baby's growth and development. Most babies find it easier to digest breast milk than they do formula (Tinned Milk).
- There are health risks to your baby if not breastfed. Breast milk contains agents (called [antibodies](#)) that protect infants from bacteria and viruses. Babies who are not exclusively breastfed for 6 months are more likely to develop a wide range of infections/diseases including measles, ear infections, diarrhea, and respiratory illnesses. They are sick more often and have more visits to the clinic/hospital.
- Breastfeeding makes it easier for the mother to lose the weight gained during pregnancy. It also helps the uterus to get back to its original size and lessens any bleeding that might occur after giving birth.
- Breastfeeding lowers the risk of breast and ovarian cancers and possibly the risk of hip fractures and osteoporosis after menopause.
- Breastfeeding can help you form a close relationship with your baby. Physical contact is important to newborns and can help them feel more secure, warmer and comforted. Your breast and nipples are designed to deliver milk to your baby. When your baby is breastfeeding effectively both the baby and yourself experience calm and comfort



This is very normal and is not from breastfeeding. As long as the baby doesn't lose more than 7 to 10% of his or her birth weight during the first three to five days, he is getting enough to eat.

- You can tell your baby is getting enough milk by keeping track of the number of wet and dirty diapers. In the first few days, when your milk is low in volume and high in nutrients, your baby will have only 1 or 2 wet diapers a day. After your milk supply has increased, your baby should have 5 to 6 wet diapers and 3 to 4 dirty diapers every day. Consult your baby's doctor if you are concerned about your baby's weight gain. You should visit your pediatrician between three to five days after your baby's birth, and then again at two to three weeks of age.
- After you and your baby go home from the hospital, your baby still needs to eat about every one to two hours and should need several diaper changes. You still may need to wake your baby to feed him or her because babies are usually sleepy for the first month.
- In the early weeks after birth, you should wake your baby to feed if four hours have passed since the beginning of the feeding. If you are having a hard time waking your baby, you can try undressing or wiping his or her face with a cool washcloth. If your baby falls asleep while breastfeeding, you can try [breast compression](#). As your milk comes in after the baby is born, there will be more and more diaper changes. The baby's stools will become runny, yellowish, and may have little white bumpy "seeds."
- Overall, you can feel confident that your baby is getting enough to eat because your breasts will regulate the amount of milk your baby needs. If your baby needs to eat more or more often, your breasts will increase the amount of milk they produce. When you are at work and cannot breast, express your breast milk into a clean cup and keep in a cool place, for the baby to be fed. Remember to use cups and spoon, not bottle and teats.

WHEN SHOULD I NOT BREASTFEED?

- A few viruses can pass through breast milk. HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is one of them. If you are HIV positive, consult your doctor for proper counseling, to enable you decide whether or not to breastfeed.
- Sometimes babies can be born with a condition called [galactosemia](#), in which they cannot tolerate milk. This is because their bodies cannot break down the sugar [lactose](#) which is found in all milk except specially treated ones from which lactose has been removed ie Lactose-free milk. Babies with classic galactosemia may have [liver problems](#), [malnutrition](#), or [mental retardation](#).



•Mothers who have active, untreated TB (tuberculosis) or who are receiving any type of chemotherapy drugs should not breastfeed.

•If you are breastfeeding, you should not take illegal drugs. Some drugs, such as cocaine and PCP, can

affect your baby and cause adverse side effects. Other drugs, such as heroin and marijuana can cause irritability, poor sleeping patterns, tremors, and vomiting. Babies can become addicted to these drugs.

It is best for you and your baby if you stop **tobacco smoking** as soon as you are pregnant. If it is difficult to stop, it is still better to breastfeed.

Alcohol also should be avoided by a pregnant or breastfeeding woman An occasional drink is ok, but avoid breastfeeding for two hours after an alcoholic drink.

Sometimes a baby may react to something the mother has eaten, but this doesn't mean the baby is allergic to the mother's milk. If you stop eating whatever is bothering your baby, the problem usually goes away on its own. Also, usually, if you have eaten a particular food throughout pregnancy, your baby has already become used to the flavor of this food, and there will be no problem. If you stop eating whatever is bothering your baby, the problem usually goes away on its own.

Some women think that when they are sick, they should not breastfeed. But, most common illnesses, such as colds, flu, or diarrhea, can't be passed through breast milk. In fact, if you are sick, your breast milk will have [antibodies](#) in it. These antibodies will help protect your baby from getting the same sickness.

IS IT SAFE TO TAKE MEDICATIONS WHILE BREASTFEEDING?

Always talk with your doctor before taking any medications. Most medications pass into your milk in small amounts. If you take medication for a long-standing condition such as high [blood pressure](#), [diabetes](#) or [asthma](#), your medication may already have been studied in breastfeeding women, so you should be able to find information to help you make an informed decision with the help of your doctor. Newer medications and medications for rare disorders may have less information available.



CAN I BREASTFEED IF MY BREASTS ARE SMALL?

•Yes, breast size is not related to the ability to produce milk for a baby. Breast size is determined by the amount of **fatty tissue** in the breast, not by the amount of milk-producing tissue. Most women, with all sizes of breasts, can make enough milk for their babies

WILL BREASTFEEDING KEEP ME FROM GETTING PREGNANT?

•Yes, usually. When you breastfeed, your ovaries can stop releasing eggs, making it harder for you to get pregnant. Your periods can also stop. But, there are no guarantees that you will not get pregnant while you are breastfeeding.

The only way to make sure pregnancy does not occur is to use a method of birth control. If you want to use a birth control pill while breastfeeding, the safest type is the "mini-pill." However, talk with your doctor or nurse about what birth control method is best for you to use while breastfeeding.

IS THERE A RIGHT WAY TO BREASTFEED?

Yes, and there are several tips for making breastfeeding a good experience for both you and your baby. You can prevent the most common challenges by following the three most important tips about breastfeeding:

1. **Breastfeed early and often.** Try to breastfeed your baby within the first 30 minutes after birth. Newborns need to nurse frequently, at least every two hours, and not on a strict schedule but on demand by the baby. This stimulates your breasts to produce plenty of milk.
2. **Breastfeed on demand.** Since breast milk is more easily digested than formula, breastfed babies eat more often than bottle-fed babies. Babies suckle less often as they get older and start solid foods. Watch your baby, not the clock, for signs of hunger, such as being more alert or active, mouthing (putting hands or fists to mouth and making sucking motion with mouth), or rooting (turning head in search of nipple). Crying is a late sign of hunger.
3. Breastfeed with the nipple and the areola (brown area surrounding the nipple) in the baby's mouth, not just the nipple.

DOES BREASTFEEDING HURT?

•No. There may be some tenderness at first, but it should gradually go away as the days go by. Your breasts and nipples are designed to deliver milk to your baby. When your baby is breastfeeding effectively, it should be calming and comfortable for both of you. If breastfeeding becomes painful for you, seek help from someone who is knowledgeable about breastfeeding.

•To avoid soreness, your baby's mouth should be wide open, with as much of the areola (the darker area around the nipple) as far back into his or her mouth as possible. The baby should never suckle on the nipple only. If it hurts, take the baby off of your breast and try again. The baby may not be latched on correctly. Break your baby's suction to your breast by gently placing your finger in the corner of his/her mouth, and re-position your baby.

*If you have any question regarding breastfeeding you may ask the State Ministry of Health,
Breastfeeding Institution (BF) Coordinator*

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Frequently Asked Questions

BREASTFEEDING

