

# Early Breastfeeding: What to Expect In the First Month

## Getting Started

- ♦ Breastfeed as soon as possible after birth, ideally within the first hour
- ♦ Keep your baby close so that you can watch for signs of hunger:
  - \* Sucking on hands
  - \* Soft cooing / sighing sounds
  - \* Rapid eye movements
- ♦ Newborns have small stomachs and need to nurse often
  - \* 8-12 times every 24 hours
  - \* At least every 2-3 hours
- ♦ Avoid pacifiers and bottles for the first month

## Bringing Baby to Breast

- ♦ Line baby's nose up with the nipple
- ♦ Let baby's head tilt slightly back
- ♦ Bring baby's mouth to and onto the nipple and allow licking
- ♦ Wait for a wide open mouth and quickly pull baby to and onto the breast

### Signs of a Good Latch

- \* Nipple is deep into baby's mouth
- \* Lips are flipped out
- \* Tongue is forward
- \* Breastfeeding should not be painful. It is normal to feel some stretching or discomfort in the early days.

## Signs your Baby is getting Milk

- ♦ You will hear your baby swallow
- ♦ Your baby will let go of the breast when full and appear satisfied
  - \* Body relaxes
  - \* Fist opens

## Baby's Weight Gain

Have baby's weight checked within the first week by:

- \* Baby's health care provider
- \* Hospital nursery
- \* Home visiting nurse
- \* WIC clinic
- \* Well child clinic
- \* Lactation consultant

Babies often lose weight the first 4 days after birth. Then most breastfed babies begin gaining 1/2 to 1 ounce per day.

⇒ By 2 weeks of age, babies should be at or above birth weight.





# Frequently Asked Breastfeeding Questions In the First Month

## **When should I breastfeed?**

Watch your baby for signs of hunger and allow your baby to breastfeed as often as desired. Every baby is different, but most will nurse at least every 2 to 3 hours.

## **My baby is really sleepy during the day. Should I be waking my baby to eat?**

Wake a sleeping baby if it has been longer than 3 hours during the day and 4 hours at night since the last nursing. It may take about five minutes to wake your baby. Rubbing baby's back, talking close to the baby's face or changing the diaper are all ways to help wake a sleepy baby.

## **I know that breastfeeding is best for my baby but it feels really strange to me. Is this normal to feel this way?**

Some new moms feel breastfeeding is awkward and uncomfortable at first.

With a little bit of practice you will begin to feel much more comfortable and even enjoy it.

## **How long should a feeding last?**

Feedings will usually last between 15-45 minutes. Allow your baby to stay on the breast as long as there is continued sucking and swallowing. You will know that your baby is finished when sucking stops and baby lets go of the breast.

## **It seems like my baby wants to breastfeed all the time. How can I tell if my baby is getting enough milk?**

The number of wet and dirty diapers is the best way to tell if your baby is getting enough milk. The number of nursings and the number of wet and dirty diapers will increase each day for the first four days of life. However, after baby is four weeks old it is normal to notice the number of dirty diapers decrease.

Day	Nursings	Wet Diapers	Dirty Diapers
1	6-8	1 or more	1 or more
2	6-8	2 or more	2 or more
3	8-12	3 or more	3 or more
4	8-12	4 or more	4 or more

## **Reasons to Get Help**

- ◆ Baby is unable to hold a proper latch
- ◆ No sign baby is getting milk
- ◆ Severe breast pain while nursing
- ◆ Less than 3 dirty diapers on day 3
- ◆ Baby continues to lose weight on day 5
- ◆ Below birth weight at 2 weeks
- ◆ Baby seems weak, tired and not interested in feeding

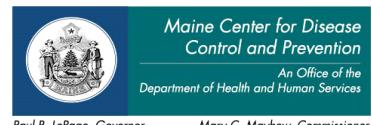
## **Where to Get Help**

- ◆ Birthing unit at hospital where you delivered
- ◆ Local WIC office
- ◆ Lactation consultant
- ◆ Baby's health care provider
- ◆ La Leche League:  
24 Hour Helpline 1-877-452-5324  
Web site <http://www.lllusa.org/MENH/Maine>  
lists phone numbers for leader to call in your area

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