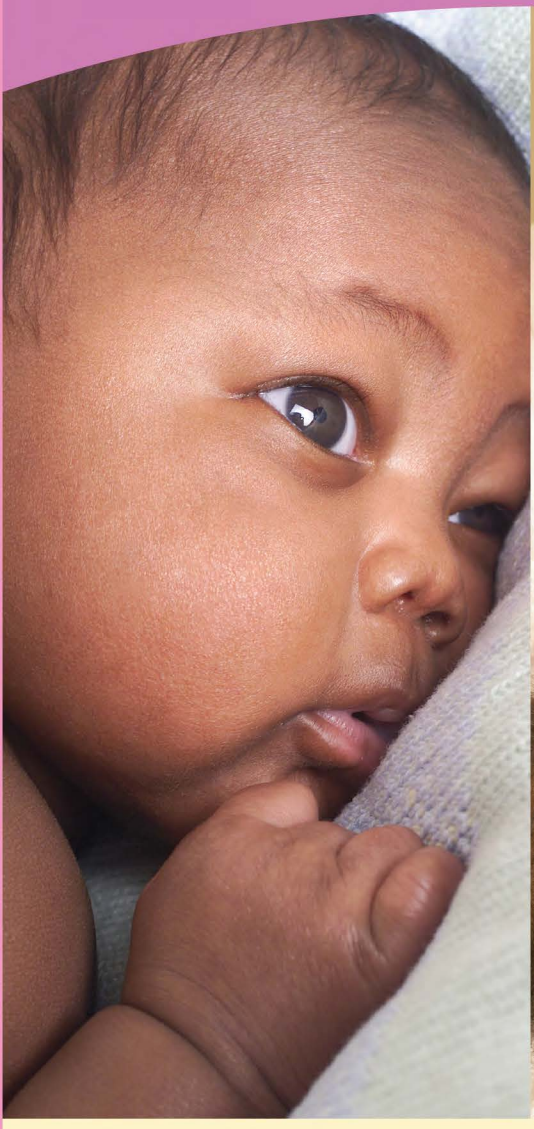
Mississippi State Department of Health

WIC — Women, Infants & Children Program

Breastfeeding Basics

The First Weeks



How often should my baby nurse?

Breastmilk is gentle to your baby's stomach and easily digested. Babies nurse often to establish the milk supply they need. Newborn babies will nurse 8 to 12 times every twenty-four hours. Nursing patterns change as babies grow. Just like us, babies are hungrier at some times more than others. Around the time of growth spurts (2 weeks, 6 weeks, and 3 months), your baby may nurse more often to meet her needs. After the growth spurt, most babies usually return to their previous nursing pattern.

Watch your baby for hunger cues:

- Smacking lips
- Sucking on hands
- Moving head around
- Rooting or turning her head to search for the breast

Crying is a late sign of hunger. Most babies will give you cues that they are hungry before they begin to cry.

Your newborn's stomach is the size of her closed fist. Only a small amount of milk will fit into your baby's stomach at one time.

You'll know breastfeeding your newborn is going well when:

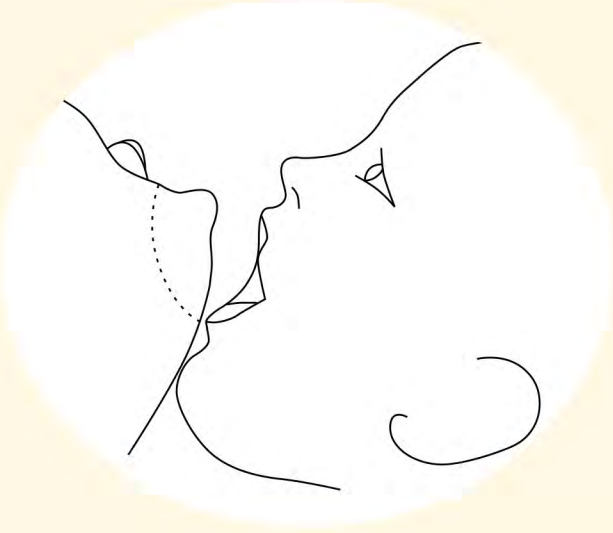
- Baby feeds 8 to 12 times every 24 hours, including at night.
- Baby wakes to feed.
- You hear swallowing when baby nurses.
- Mom's breasts soften during the feeding.
- Baby has plenty of wet and dirty diapers:
  - At least one wet diaper and one poop the first day of life.
  - On day three breastfed babies usually have 3–4 wet diapers and 1–2 poops.
  - Later during the first week of life breastfed babies usually have about six wet diapers and a yellow poop after almost every feeding.
- Baby has regained her birth weight within 10–14 days.

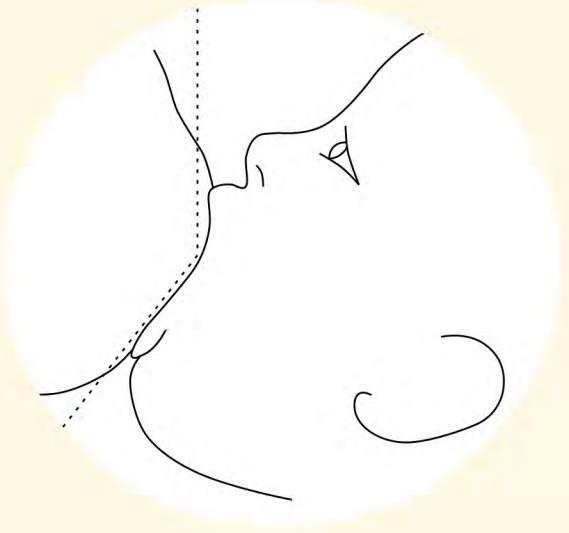
Proper Latching

You know your baby is latched on well when:

- A large part of the dark area (areola) below the nipple is deep in baby's mouth.
- Baby's chin is pressed into your breast and her nose is not.
- Baby's lips are curved outward.
- Breastfeeding is free from pain.

Most babies end the feeding by letting go. If you need to stop the feeding, slip your finger into her mouth to break the suction.





Watch the baby, not the clock, for hunger and fullness cues.

You'll know baby is full when:

- Her body is relaxed.
- Her fists are open.
- She lets go of the breast.

Should you wake a sleeping baby to nurse?

During the newborn period, wake a baby who has been sleeping for four hours. You can:

- Change the diaper.
- Remove the blanket.
- Wash the baby with a cool washcloth.

Diapers — What's normal?

During the first week, stools will change from black and tarry to yellow and liquid. This is normal and is not diarrhea. Normal stool texture is liquid to soft. In the first few weeks some babies will have a poop diaper after each nursing. You'll notice more wet and poop diapers as your milk supply increases.

Be patient with yourself and your baby. Breastfeeding is a learned skill that takes practice.

Your decision to breastfeed is an important one for you and your baby. When you breastfeed, you can be sure that you are giving your baby the best nutrition with benefits that will last a lifetime.

Tips During the Hospital Stay

- Try to nurse within the first hour after delivery.
- Keep your baby in your room for frequent nursing.
- Nurse 8–12 times every 24 hours.
- Avoid formula, pacifiers, bottle nipples, and water unless medically necessary.
- Ask for help if breastfeeding hurts or if your baby doesn't latch on well.

Easy Steps to Get Started Breastfeeding

1. Get in a comfortable position, with relaxed shoulders and arms, sitting up straight with a flat lap.
2. Hold your baby beneath your breasts with her entire body facing you. Support her back, neck, and shoulders, allowing her head to rest naturally.
3. Support the breast by placing fingers underneath the breast against the chest wall.
4. Point your nipple to the area between your baby's nose and top lip.
5. Rub the bottom side of the nipple on the baby's lower lip, keeping your nipple above baby's top lip.
6. Wait for your baby to open her mouth wide, then pull her in close with her chin touching your breast and place your nipple into your baby's mouth. Her upper lip should reach just up and over the nipple.
7. Let the baby nurse on the first side for as long as she wants. Burp the baby. If she is still showing signs of hunger, offer the other breast.

MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

WWW.HEALTHYMS.COM

1-866-HLTHY4U

As a breastfeeding mom, you will get lots of support and help from WIC. To learn more, call your local WIC clinic or **1-800-545-6747**.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1.) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

(2.) Fax: 202-690-7442 or

(3.) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

5196 4-18-17