



Exclusive Breastfeeding the First Six Months and Feeding on Cue

**Most babies need only breastmilk for six months.
No other food or fluid.**

Breastmilk:

- Provides all the nutrition baby needs.
- Protects your baby against diarrhea, pneumonia, ear infection, diabetes, obesity, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and autism.*

Formula:

- Doesn't have disease-fighting properties.
- Takes longer to digest.
- Makes baby feed less at the breast, which decreases your milk production.

Colostrum:

- Is your first milk. It helps protect your baby against disease.
- Small amounts just fit baby's stomach.
- As your baby's stomach grows, so does your milk supply.

Weight loss:

- Baby's weight may drop up to 10% the first few days. That's usually normal. It's extra water weight.
- Babies are usually back to birth weight by two weeks.

Starting solids:

- Most babies are ready to start eating solid foods around six months old, or when they can sit up independently and place food safely in their mouths.
- Giving solids too soon is linked to higher rates of respiratory and stomach illness.

Continue breastfeeding after your baby starts solids. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding for two years, or more if desired.

Talk with your health care team about the Baby Led Weaning method for introducing solids.

- Protects your baby against diarrhea, pneumonia, ear infection, diabetes, obesity, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and autism.*
- Babies feed themselves solid food.
- No need for jarred foods or purees.
- Breastfeeding can continue during pregnancy, and an older child can breastfeed along with an infant.

Feeding on Cue

Feeding babies whenever they show cues meets the needs of mother and baby.

Baby feeding cues:

- Sticks tongue out.
- Brings hands to mouth.
- Turns toward a hand or object near the mouth.
- Crying is a late sign. Feed your baby when early cues happen to keep your baby from becoming too fussy.

Babies nurse for comfort as well as food. Nurse as often as baby wants.

- Calming hormones released in your body and baby's body during breastfeeding help your baby relax and fall asleep.
- Comfort sucking feels soft and fast. The drinking suck feels long and strong.

Finish the first breast first.

- Milk fats released at the end of feeding make baby feel full and pop off or fall asleep. Then switch to the second side.
- Offer both breasts each feeding and alternate the side you start on.

Feed frequently.

- Feed on cue and no longer than three hours apart for the first six weeks. This helps build a good milk supply.
- Babies may have frequent feedings called cluster feeding. This is common in the evening over the first three months. It also happens when baby has a growth spurt.

Avoid pacifiers and bottles. This will help your baby's latch and increase your milk supply.

- The flow from a bottle is faster than the breast, which can confuse your baby.
- Baby sucking a pacifier or bottle means your breast gets less stimulation to make milk.
- If you plan to offer a bottle, wait at least six weeks after birth.



*Meek, J. Y., & Noble, L. (2022). Policy statement: Breastfeeding and the use of human milk.