



BREASTFEEDING

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THE CHOICE TO BREASTFEED

Breastfeeding your baby is good for your newborn child's physical and mental health.

However, there may be lots of reasons that breastfeeding is not the best option for you. It doesn't make you a bad mother to use alternatives to breastfeeding. Talking with a doctor or family member can help you make this personal decision.

◇ Pros:

- Provides your baby with antibodies to fight diseases and decreases the development of allergies
- Whole nutrition
- Intimate bonding experience with baby
- Mom burns calories
- Helps uterus contract to normal size after delivery

- Can delay ovulation and the return of periods

◇ Cons:

- Time-consuming
- Must maintain a healthy diet
- Must be careful about medications and types of food ingested
- May be painful
- May be stressful or feel like an additional burden

THE “LATCHING ON” TECHNIQUE

“Latching on” is how your baby takes your nipples. The following steps can

help you to obtain a good latch.

1. Position nipple with thumb on top and fingers underneath breast.
2. Make sure your baby is stomach-to-stomach with you and has their chin tilted back from the chest.
3. Touch your nipple to your baby's upper lip until the mouth opens very wide.
4. Insert the entire nipple into your baby's mouth and pull your baby close to your body (but don't lean into your baby).

5. Both lips should “pout out” and cover almost the entire areola (the areola is the portion of pigmented skin surrounding your nipple). Your baby’s tongue should be down and the cheeks should be rounded. If your baby’s lips are not “pouting”, you can use your finger to pull them into the proper position.
6. Keep your baby’s body in alignment to help swallowing. You should hear swallowing, not smacking noises when your baby is feeding.
7. Your baby should be moving his or her jaw circularly when

feeding.

8. At the end of feeding, make sure your nipple isn't flattened or misshapen.

POSITIONING

Positioning yourself and the baby is also an important step in breastfeeding.

- ◇ Lean back in a comfortable, supportive chair.
- ◇ Use a pillow or place feet up on stool.
- ◇ Pick the position that is most comfortable for you. Reclining may be your best option if you are recovering from a C-section.



◇ Cradle position



◇ Cross-over hold



◇ Clutch or football hold



◇ Reclining

WHAT IS YOUR LET-
DOWN REFLEX?

This happens several seconds or a couple minutes into breastfeeding when milk flows more easily and quickly. The quick release of milk may cause your baby to cough. To prevent this, before beginning feeding, rub your breast until milk begins to drip so that let-down happens before your baby has latched on.

The let-down reflex can also happen if feeding is overdue or if your baby is crying. In these cases, milk may drip from the breast not most recently used or you may feel a tingle. If you're having trouble with let-down, it means that you may be stressed or rushed. It can help, in these cases, to hold something that smells like or reminds you of your baby.

DIFFICULTIES

You may have some soreness, dryness, or discomfort associated with breastfeeding. Limiting feeding time may not necessarily help and may even lead to further discomfort. Talk with your doctor, a nurse at the WIC's Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program, or other family members

What are some ways to reduce pain?

- ◇ Make sure your baby is properly latched. If not, start over. You can release suction by putting your finger in corner of your baby's mouth.

- ◇ Apply crushed ice or cold compress before feeding.
- ◇ Position any sore part of nipple in corner of baby's mouth.
- ◇ Change positions.
- ◇ Allow nipples to air dry between feedings.
- ◇ Avoid lotions or soaps that may have alcohol in them.
- ◇ Avoid bra pads lined with plastic.
- ◇ Use nipple cream for immediate, short-term pain relief.



Express milk until let-down.
Sometimes, your milk ducts may not fully empty, leading to swelling and discomfort.



ALTERNATIVES

The amount of milk you produce can vary based on your body and your situation. If you aren't able to produce enough milk or you don't have time in your schedule for breastfeeding, you

may consider using a breast pump or supplemental feeding of your baby with formula.

If you decide to bottle feed your baby, it may cause "nipple confusion." This occurs when your baby uses the same techniques from bottle-feeding on breasts, causing difficulty in latching on. So, it can be more difficult to switch back to breastfeeding after bottle-feeding.

The WIC can help you decide which method is best for you. If you qualify, the WIC can even provide financial assistance with baby formula.

What are some things to know before using a breast pump?

- ◇ You should start pumping a couple weeks before going back to work so you and your baby have time to adjust.
- ◇ Manual pumps are cheaper but require more physical work.
- ◇ Electric pumps are more expensive, but can pump both breasts at once, so it may be better for moms with busy schedules. However, the noise of an electric pump may be annoying.

- ◇ Avoid used pumps unless they are sterilized.
- ◇ Make sure your pump fits your breast.

DIET

When breastfeeding or using a pump to bottle-feed, it's important to pay attention to your diet. Many of the things you consume will be given to your baby through your breast milk.

What are some things you can do to make sure your breast milk is healthy?

- ◇ Stay hydrated.

- ◇ Eat a well-balanced diet with whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and good fats.
- ◇ Eat some fish, which contain omega-3, DHA, and EPA. However, make sure to avoid some fish, like tuna, that may have a high mercury content.
- ◇ Eat low fat content meats, which have a relatively low content of harmful chemicals.
- ◇ Avoid fruits and vegetables with high levels of pesticides.
- ◇ Try not to diet while breastfeeding. During this time,

your body will need about 500 more calories a day than normal.

- ◇ Do not smoke, use marijuana, illicit drugs, or misuse prescription drugs. These substances can be passed onto your baby through milk. If you are planning on drinking alcohol, wait 2-3 hours to feed or pre-pump.
- ◇ Avoid caffeine.
- ◇ Take vitamins (E.g., vitamin D, and calcium).
- ◇ Consult LactMed ([online](#)) to make sure the medications you

are taking are safe for
breastfeeding.