

Dream Feeding 101: How To Do It Right & When To Stop

By Arlene Maynard / March 25, 2025

This surely sounds familiar – it's the middle of the night, and you're finally getting some well-deserved rest. But just as you go to bed, your newborn's hungry cries pull you out of bed. You gently wake your sleeping baby, offer a breast or bottle, and allow them to feed to their satisfaction, then settle them back to sleep.

As a [Newborn Care Specialist](#) (NCS), I've worked with many parents, and one technique I often recommend is dream feeding newborn. But what is dream feed? A gentle method that can help infants from 0 to 9+ months old sleep longer stretches while they are well-fed.

Many parents wonder – is dream feeding safe? Yes, if done correctly, it is totally safe for breastfeeding a baby.

However, if your baby has reflux or struggles with swallowing, I recommend speaking with a pediatrician or lactation consultant before trying dream feeds.

Anyway, I've seen how dream feeding can help get more sleep for both babies and parents. Some of the biggest benefits include:

1. Fewer Night Waking: Infants wake up in two to three hours of sleep, feeding around while they are half asleep offers your baby longer stretches.
2. Better Sleep for Parents: I often tell sleep-deprived parents that dream feeding can help them sleep for longer.
3. Supports Sleep Training: Many sleep consultants I know use dream feeding as part of newborns' sleep training methods.
4. Prevent From Early Morning Waking: Babies who get a late-night feeding are less likely to wake up at 4 AM starving.

Another Tip

Keep in mind that dream feeding doesn't work the same way for every baby. If you're struggling to make it work, consulting an NCS can help to fit your child's needs. I often get asked, what age to stop dream feed? The answer varies so you must take a look at the next section.

In this guide, I'll tell you everything you need to know about dream feeding your little one and help your baby how to transition away from it when the time comes.

Key Takeaways:

Best time to start: Around 2-3 months when longer nighttime sleep patterns develop.

Keep it quiet and gentle, avoid waking your baby fully.

Burping is usually minimal, but a light pat may help.

Safe for most babies, but consult a pediatrician if your baby has reflux.

Biggest benefits are more sleep for parents, support for sleep training, and fewer early risings.

Most babies stop between 4-9 months, signs include sleeping through the night and taking less milk.

How to Dream Feed your Baby?



To perform a dream feed, gently wake your baby just enough to feed them while they're still drowsy, aiming for a late-night feeding before you go to sleep to potentially extend their sleep.

As I mentioned at the beginning, dream feeding a newborn is a late-night feeding that you do while your baby is still sleepy, usually between 10 PM and midnight. The goal is to fill their tummy and put your baby back to sleep so they don't up hungry again.

Here are my 5 tips to dream feed a baby:

Tip 1: Pick the Right Time

First, when to start dream feed? Based on my experience, the best time to start dream feed is around 2-3 months when babies begin to develop longer sleep patterns.

Tip 2: Keep It Quiet and Calm

I always suggest avoiding bright lights or loud noises to prevent waking your baby fully. Also, make sure you pick up your baby out of the crib carefully.

Tip 3: Use a Gentle Approach

Hold your baby in your arm in a feeding position and wake up your baby lightly brush the nipple (breast or bottle) against their lips to encourage sucking.

Tip 4: Burp Your Baby

Many newborn babies don't swallow much air during dream feeds, so a gentle pat on the back is usually enough.

Tip 5: Lay Them Down Carefully

Once they take a full feeding, place them back in their crib or bassinet while they remain drowsy but settled.

Along with these, make sure you don't extra feed your baby. Additionally, frequent waking in the night will tire you easily. If you need professional help, do seek a [Newborn Care Specialist \(NCS\) dream feed your baby](#).

Dream Feed by Age Chart

Here's a general guideline yet learning what your baby needs is critical:

Age	Feeding Timing	Should You Continue?

0-3 months	10 PM – 12 AM	Yes, it helps with nighttime hunger.
4-6 months	10 PM – 11 PM	Yes, but you should start reducing dependency.
6-9 months	10 PM	Drop the dream feed gradually if the baby sleeps through.
9+ months	Varies for older babies	Usually, no longer needed but your baby may continue.

Dream Feed Schedule

Many parents find it helpful to follow a structured feeding schedule so it aligns with their sleep schedule. Your baby's feeding schedule might look like this:

- 7:00 PM – Last evening feeding before bedtime.
- 7:30 PM – Baby goes to sleep.
- 10:30 PM – Dream feed, which means without waking baby fully.
- 4:00 AM – If needed, another night feeding gradually phase this out.

If this schedule doesn't work for your baby, consider reaching out to a [sleep consultant](#) for a customized time. Sleep consultants understand that every baby is different and can develop a plan that considers your baby's individual needs, sleep patterns, and any specific challenges they might be facing.

They can provide evidence-based strategies and techniques to help establish healthy sleep habits, troubleshoot problems, and create a sustainable sleep routine.