



Establishing a Breastfeeding Routine

It is such a joy to observe an infant's responses to the world. As you watch your newborn gaze in wonder at the people and objects around them, nestle against you with a whimper of pleasure, and occasionally startle in response to a loud noise, you may feel that you're experiencing many of the wide range of emotions yourself. During the first days and weeks at home with a new baby, you may swing between feelings of joy and uncertainty, confidence and confusion, excitement and exasperation. These are all very natural and expected feelings. If your emotional responses during the postpartum period are more extreme than you expected or feel you can handle, talk with your physician.



In general, the simpler and more predictable you can keep your daily routine as you continue getting to know your baby and familiarizing yourself with breastfeeding, the better for you and your family.

Find some favorite spots

Though one of the great advantages of breastfeeding is its adaptability—you can feed your baby practically anywhere without equipment and without delay—you might find that choosing one or two favorite places for breastfeeding at first will make your adjustment easier. During the day, you might opt for a sofa or chair in the living room or kitchen, since this allows you to take part in family life as you nurse. Some new mothers find that breastfeeding in bed, with plenty of pillows for support and their baby's bassinet waiting close by, allows the baby to drift off comfortably to sleep at the end of the nursing session and makes it easier for the mother to nap.

Nursing mothers in many cultures sleep with their babies until they wean. However, bed sharing can be hazardous to your baby. Bed sharing is a particular concern if the mother is obese; if she is using any substances that may alter her state of arousal, such as mind-altering drugs or excessive alcohol; if she is a smoker; or if other children are also in the bed. If you decide to breastfeed your baby in bed, move them back to their bassinet, on their back, once they're done and before you drift off to sleep. It is also risky (</English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/Safe-Sleep-Charlies-Story.aspx>) to fall asleep with your infant on a couch or in a reclining chair. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends parents have their new babies sleep in the same room as the parents, but on a separate sleep surface, such as a bassinet.

Set up essentials nearby

Once you've picked a couple of locations for breastfeeding, make sure that such essentials as baby wipes and diapers are within reach before you start nursing. Keep a bottle of water or something else to drink nearby for you, as nursing mothers should drink plenty of water or other noncaffeinated beverages to avoid thirst.

If you have older children, a basket of toys, workbooks, or audio recordings can keep you from having to get up in the middle of a breastfeeding session. You might also keep a pad and pencil within reach to track your baby's feedings.

Of course, you won't necessarily need every one of these items, nor do you need to create a formal "nursing area" to breastfeed successfully. However, thinking ahead about what you might want nearby can make life more manageable in the early days.

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[Back to Top](#)