

Transcript

While breastfeeding is natural, it takes some getting used to. But rest assured, there are ways to help make it easier and a lot of strategies available to help you feed your baby. Every baby is different.

“Babies are not textbooks. There’s no specific time limit we go by. You want to breastfeed on demand.”

To feed on demand, you will feed your baby whenever she signals she’s hungry. After the first week or so, most babies will let you know when they are hungry by bringing their hands to their mouths, making rooting or sucking motions, or becoming very active.

Get to know your little one; her cues and feeding patterns so you can provide all the breast milk your baby needs. You can feed your healthy baby on demand, but if your baby doesn’t show signs of being hungry, or doesn’t wake up for feedings, you should still schedule at least one feeding every 3 to 4 hours.

Stimulate your sleepy newborn to feed by changing his diaper, with skin to skin contact, wiping his face with a wet washcloth, or by gently rubbing his back, head or the bottom of his feet.

Each time you start a feeding, switch which breast you begin with, since most newborns usually don’t empty the second breast as well as the first. This helps to make sure that both are equally stimulated and that neither breast becomes uncomfortable.

If you have difficulty remembering which side to start with, start the feeding with whichever breast feels the most full. As breastfeeding becomes routine you will learn to gauge the fullness of each breast.

“When should I switch breasts and how many minutes in between?”

“Well, actually, Dexter is going to decide how long he wants to nurse on that first side. So there really isn’t any set time as to how many minutes he should have on each side, he’ll determine.”

Demand feeding also means you will feed your baby for as long as she wants on each side. There is no set schedule. Be flexible and follow your baby’s cues.

When your baby’s sucking slows or stops and your breast is soft, he may be done on that side. Burp your baby and then offer him the second side. He may or may not take the second side. That’s ok. Remember, every baby is different.

Newborns will usually tell you when they’re finished nursing by falling asleep or turning away. If your child falls asleep after getting just a little milk, encourage her to continue so that she gets all the rich, nutritious milk she needs.

After the first week, you’ll know that your baby is getting enough milk if he wets six or more diapers a day and passes at least one stool each day. Weight gain is also another sign that your child is eating well.

Remember, correctly breastfed babies get all the nutrition they need from breast milk. Supplemental bottles of formula or water the first few weeks of life are not needed. They may discourage your baby from breastfeeding and decrease your milk supply.

If you're planning to return to work or to be away from your baby during feeding times, you may already be thinking about pumping and storing your breast milk. Adding bottles of breast milk to your routine should be considered only after your milk supply is well established. Talk to your baby's pediatrician or your lactation consultant to see if, and when, pumping is right for you.

Although it may not seem like it in the beginning, breastfeeding your baby will get easier with time. As you get to know your baby's cues, as well as your own body, you will develop some of your own feeding strategies so you are able to better respond to all your baby's feeding needs.