

# AGES AND STAGES: BREASTFEEDING DURING YOUR BABY'S FIRST YEAR

*Adapted from "Ages and Stages: What to Expect During Breastfeeding"*

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## **BREASTFEEDING YOUR 1-2 MONTH OLD WHAT TO EXPECT!**

### **During this time your baby may:**

- » Turn his head and eyes toward light
- » Watch your face and try to respond to speech
- » Become quiet at the sound of your voice and smile at you
- » Hold his head up without wobbling
- » Begin to make cooing sounds at 6-8 weeks
- » Cry in different ways to say she is hurt, wet, or hungry

### **Things your baby may enjoy:**

- » Mobiles and wrist rattles
- » Being rocked gently to a lullaby
- » Wind-up musical toys

### **Breastfeeding during this time:**

- » First off, congratulations on your decision to breastfeed! Any amount of breastmilk you provide for your baby helps get him off to a healthier start.
- » Spend time with other breastfeeding mothers, but remember that all babies are different and there is a wide range of normal newborn behavior.
- » Your baby is learning to trust that you are there to feed and comfort him; he may seem calmer and cry less.
- » You might not feel the letdown reflex, or its intensity may have subsided.
- » Continue to keep a flexible feeding schedule. Nighttime feedings are still expected, but your baby might sleep for 4-5 hour stretches at night.
- » The breast fullness you had the first several weeks is less, but this does not mean you don't have enough milk. Your body is just getting adjusted to its new role.
- » If you are using any formula, your body may decrease the amount of milk it makes because you are skipping a feeding.
- » Take a nap each day, as fatigue is your worst enemy.
- » Breastfeeding your baby frequently is the best way to have plenty of milk and a satisfied baby.
- » Eat anything you want in moderation and drink plenty of water.
- » You may find your pre-pregnant figure return as you burn calories making breastmilk.

### **Call your breastfeeding helper for advice or support if:**

- » Your nipples are still sore when your baby latches on and throughout the feeding.
- » You don't think you have enough milk for your baby.
- » You have questions about pumping and storing milk.
- » You are feeling overwhelmed and just need to hear a friendly voice.

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## **BREASTFEEDING YOUR 3-4 MONTH OLD**

### **WHAT TO EXPECT!**

#### **During this time your baby may:**

- » Sleep and cry less and spend more time learning about her world
- » Start to reach for mobiles, rattles, and small toys, and grasp a rattle when it is handed to her
- » Begin to drool, especially in the 4th month
- » Roll over, usually from stomach to back first
- » Start laughing and making sounds like “aaaaa” and “oooo”
- » Begin sleeping through the night
- » Watch you walk across a room

#### **Things your baby may enjoy:**

- » Taking a bath and learning to splash
- » A child-proof mirror on the edge of the crib
- » Your singing!
- » Playing pat-a-cake, by clapping her hands together
- » Going for a ride in a stroller

#### **Breastfeeding during this time:**

- » Breastmilk is all your baby needs to stay healthy and grow. Cereal is not necessary at this time, and giving solids too soon will decrease your milk supply and may increase the incidence of food allergies.
- » Around 3 months, some babies experience a “growth spurt” and want to nurse more frequently. If this happens, just breastfeed your baby more often, rest, and avoid the temptation to give formula. This is nature’s way of increasing your milk supply as your baby grows. In a couple of days, your milk supply will catch up with your baby’s demand.
- » Your breasts may still leak at feeding times or during the night if your baby sleeps for a longer stretch of time than usual.
- » You should discuss birth control with your doctor/midwife at your postpartum check-up because it is possible to become pregnant while breastfeeding.
- » It is normal not to be interested in sex the way you were before having your baby. Talk to your partner because some partners may feel like they are in competition with the baby.
- » Around 4 months or so, your baby may pat the breast lovingly while nursing.

#### **Call your breastfeeding helper for advice or support if:**

- » You are returning to work and have questions about pumping and storing breastmilk.
- » You just need a friend or someone to tell you what a great job you are doing.

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## BREASTFEEDING YOUR 5-6 MONTH OLD

### WHAT TO EXPECT!

#### **During this time your baby may:**

- » Shake and bang things
- » Roll over, tummy to back and back to tummy
- » Sit with support
- » Put things in his mouth
- » Reach out to be picked up
- » Turn his head when he hears your voice, even if you are across the room
- » Become more aware of strangers

#### **Things your baby may enjoy:**

- » A small ball to roll and hold onto
- » Soft toys that he can put into his mouth
- » An activity gym with things to reach for that move when hit
- » Toys that make noises when they are shaken or squeezed

#### **Breastfeeding during this time:**

- » Your baby will continue to get antibodies from you that will protect him from common illnesses.
- » Your baby may become easily distracted while nursing but this does not mean he is not interested in continuing to breastfeed. Babies are just very curious about their world, and this is a healthy sign of normal development.
- » Your baby may nurse for shorter periods of time because he is very efficient at breastfeeding now, and he requires less time to satisfy his hunger needs.
- » Drooling and sucking on fingers is common and may mean the start of teething. Nursing may make your baby's gums tender, and he may pull away from the breast abruptly.
- » You will most likely begin feeding your baby solid foods now. Do this slowly, starting with single grain cereals like rice or barley, then fruits, vegetables, and meats. Allow at least several days to a week between each new food to check for different allergies.

#### **Call your breastfeeding helper for advice or support if:**

- » You just need someone to talk to who understands what it is like to have a baby.
- » You have questions about any aspect of breastfeeding.

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## **BREASTFEEDING YOUR 7-8 MONTH OLD WHAT TO EXPECT!**

### **During this time your baby may:**

- » Have her first tooth (7 months is the most common age)
- » Drool and chew on everything
- » Begin to crawl or just rock on hands and knees
- » Reach for the spoon during feedings
- » Sit alone without support
- » Close her mouth and turn her head away when she is no longer hungry
- » Show signs of anxiety when separated from parent

### **Things your baby may enjoy:**

- » Searching for toys hidden under a blanket or basket
- » Dropping objects over the edge of the crib or high chair
- » Following a ball rolling away from her
- » Smiling at herself in the mirror

### **Breastfeeding during this time:**

- » If your baby reacts fearfully to a stranger, she may turn to you for comfort and reassurance and increase her feedings. This need for closeness will eventually help your baby become more independent, so do not view it as a step backwards or force her to go to others.
- » This can be a time when mothers feel pressure from others to wean because the baby seems so independent, but the security of nursing is still an important factor in the baby's life.
- » Biting during teething is common. If this happens, pull the baby in close to you or immediately break the suction with your finger, take your baby off the breast, and wait for a few minutes before trying to feed again. You may have to do this several times. Avoid yelling at your baby. Yelling might make her refuse the breast.
- » Nursing strikes (sudden loss of interest in the breast) can occur, and the reason is often unknown. You may need to pump for comfort and to maintain your milk supply. Sometimes mother-to-baby skin-to-skin contact helps the baby return to the breast.

### **Call your breastfeeding helper for advice or support if:**

- » You need support, encouragement, and reminding that you are providing something no one else can for your baby.
- » You have questions about weaning your baby and need information and support.

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## **BREASTFEEDING YOUR 9-10 MONTH OLD WHAT TO EXPECT!**

### **During this time your baby may:**

- » Crawl or attempt to crawl
- » Pull to standing position while holding onto furniture
- » Play peek-a-boo or wave bye-bye after seeing you do it
- » Look at the right person when someone says “mama” or “dada”
- » Explore the home. Make sure it has been baby-proofed and that your baby is never left unattended if not in a playpen or crib
- » Understand if you say “no”

### **Things your baby may enjoy:**

- » Stacking rings or soft blocks
- » Pop-up toys
- » Inflatable rolls (never balloons)
- » First books
- » Safe household objects such as sauce pans, lids, and wooden spoons

### **Breastfeeding during this time:**

- » Your baby is still receiving important nourishment that only you can provide.
- » Your baby may hold onto the breast with one or both hands while nursing.
- » Babies become easily distracted at the breast and may interrupt their feedings frequently.
- » Your baby enjoys finger foods at this time. They give him a sense of independence.
- » Your baby can join the rest of the family for meals as he begins to develop a regular pattern of three meals a day.
- » Remember that if you wean your baby, he should receive formula. He is still too young for cow’s milk. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastmilk for at least the first year of life.
- » If breastfeeding is decreasing as you introduce table foods, you may see a change in your baby’s bowel movements; they will become firmer and may at times be difficult to pass. If this occurs, increase the time at the breast, and consult the baby’s doctor if the problem persists.

### **Call your breastfeeding helper for advice or support if:**

- » Your breasts are unusually full and firm, and you think you might have an infection because your baby is suddenly nursing less.
- » You have questions about weaning your baby or continuing to provide breastmilk as your baby reaches his first birthday.

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## **BREASTFEEDING YOUR 11-12 MONTH OLD WHAT TO EXPECT!**

### **During this time your baby may:**

- » Hand you an object on request
- » Follow simple directions, such as “clap hands,” and “give it to Mommy”
- » Show affection towards familiar people
- » Stand alone for a few seconds and even try to walk a few steps
- » Help with dressing by putting out arms for sleeves and feet for shoes
- » Shake her head “no”
- » Pay attention to conversations

### **Things your baby may enjoy:**

- » Responding to music by dancing or bouncing
- » Putting blocks in and out of a container
- » Opening and closing cabinet doors
- » Drinking from a cup
- » Simple musical toys
- » Push and pull toys

### **Breastfeeding during this time:**

- » You may want to keep a toy or a snack with you when you go out in case your baby gets fussy and you are uncomfortable breastfeeding an older baby in public.
- » It is normal and healthy to continue to breastfeed, and breastfeeding provides nutritional advantages and emotional security for toddlers.
- » It is also normal to sometimes feel irritated by your baby at the breast; this may help you know that it may be time to wean your baby or to limit the number of feedings.
- » Whatever you decide about continuing to breastfeed or not, it is your decision and should be respected.
- » Many babies will wean themselves down to just 2-3 feedings a day, depending on how much solid food they are getting.
- » Even nursing once or twice a day can be relaxing and enjoyable for you and your baby. It encourages a slow and gradual weaning process and continues to provide great health benefits to both of you.

### **Call your breastfeeding helper for advice or support if:**

- » You are feeling pressured by anyone to stop breastfeeding your baby.
- » You need someone to help educate others about the benefits of continued breastfeeding.