

Breastfeeding Your Baby

Follow these tips to help you and your baby start breastfeeding and keep breastfeeding for as long as you and your baby choose.

Getting off to a good start

- » Breastmilk is the only food your new baby needs.
- » Doctors say it is best to feed your baby only breastmilk until he is around 6 months old, but any amount of breastfeeding will benefit you and your baby.
- » Let your doctor, nurse, and family know that you are planning to breastfeed.
- » Tell hospital staff not to offer your baby a bottle or pacifier.
- » Have your baby stay with you in your hospital room.

Asking for help is normal

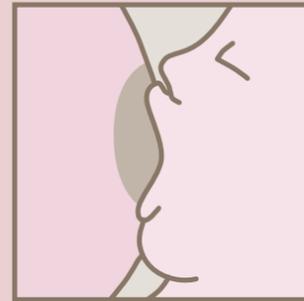
- » Learning to breastfeed takes time for both you and your baby. Many moms need help learning to breastfeed their babies.
- » Call WIC or a breastfeeding specialist with questions about breastfeeding. If you wait too long to get the help you need, it may be harder to breastfeed.

Breastfeeding should not hurt!

- » If your breasts feel overly full, breastfeed more often.
- » Sore nipples are usually caused by putting the baby to your breast incorrectly.
- » Call WIC or a breastfeeding specialist if you feel pain when you breastfeed.

Breastfeeding in the first 6 months

- » Breastfeed your baby as soon as possible after birth. Keep your baby's bed in your room in the hospital and at home. It is easier to breastfeed a hungry baby right away if you are always together.
- » Breastfeed your baby when she is hungry. She will show you she is hungry by sucking on her hands, moving her mouth or eyes, or stretching. Do not wait until she is frustrated and crying.
- » It is normal for your body to make only small amounts of milk during the first few days after your baby is born. This milk, called colostrum, will protect your baby from germs and illness. Your body will make more milk 2 to 4 days after birth.
- » Newborns need to breastfeed every few hours. Breastfeed your baby at least 8 times every 24 hours during the first few weeks after birth. The longer and more often your baby breastfeeds, the more milk your body will make. After about a month, your baby should learn to take in more milk with fewer feedings.



- » Do not use pacifiers or bottles in the first few weeks after birth – they may make it hard for your baby to breastfeed.
- » Your baby will want to breastfeed more often during growth spurts at 2 to 4 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months. Your body will make enough milk at these times to meet his needs.
- » Talk with WIC or a breastfeeding specialist before giving your baby formula for the first time. Using formula will cause your body to make less milk.

Signs that breastfeeding is going well in the first month

- » When your baby is breastfeeding, her mouth is open wide like a yawn with her lips flipped out.
- » You can hear or see the baby swallowing as he breastfeeds.
- » Your baby breastfeeds at least 8 times every 24 hours.
- » Your baby is happy or sleepy after breastfeeding.
- » By the end of the first week, your baby wets at least 4 diapers every day.
- » By the end of the first week, your baby makes at least 3 soft yellow bowel movements every 24 hours.

Breastfeeding beyond 6 months

- » Most babies are ready to try other foods when they are around 6 months old.
- » Your baby will still need breastmilk several times a day for the first year.
- » After one year, you can continue to breastfeed for as long as you and your baby want.



www.health.ri.gov/breastfeeding

For more information about family health services and programs, call the Family Health Information Line at 1-800-942-7434. Our staff speaks English and Spanish. We're ready to help.

Other common concerns

- » Your family and friends can help you care for your baby in many other ways besides feeding her. Tell them why breastfeeding is important to you. They want the best for you and your baby.
- » A Rhode Island law allows you to breastfeed anywhere in public. If you feel embarrassed, you can learn to breastfeed so no one sees anything. Your WIC nutritionist, peer counselor, or breastfeeding specialist can teach you how.
- » Many moms go back to school or work and keep breastfeeding. Talk to your WIC nutritionist, peer counselor, or breastfeeding specialist about learning to pump your breastmilk. If you choose not to pump your breastmilk, you can still breastfeed before you leave home each day and after you return.
- » Smoking, drinking alcohol, and taking medications do not mean that you cannot breastfeed your baby. The benefits of breastfeeding may outweigh the health risks to your child. Talk to a WIC nutritionist, peer counselor, or breastfeeding specialist about the best choices for your family.