



Breastfeeding the First Few Weeks

Birth

Milk: Your body makes colostrum, a rich thick yellowish milk. This gives your baby a healthy dose of antibodies.

Your Baby: Your baby will most likely be awake during the first hour after birth. This is the optimal time to breast feed your baby for the first time.

Mom: You will be tired and excited.

The First 12-24 Hours

Milk: Your baby will drink colostrum at each feeding. You may or may not see the colostrum.

Your Baby: Labor and delivery are hard work. Your baby may sleep heavily during this time. Some babies are so sleepy they find it difficult to latch well. Feedings may be short and disorganized, occurring every 1-2 hours. Most feedings should last 10-20 minutes on each breast. Longer feedings, especially as mom and baby are learning to latch may cause nipple irritation. Each time your baby wakes, put him to the breast.

Mom: You will be tired, too. Make sure you rest, eat healthy and stay well hydrated. Put away your phone and prioritize yourself and your baby over visitors.

The Next Few Days

Milk: Your milk should come in. The color will change from yellow to white with a yellow tinge. Contact your doctor or lactation consultant if your milk has not come in by day 4.

Your Baby: Your baby will feed at least 8-12 times in 24 hours, some babies feed more. New, breastfed babies do not always eat on a schedule. Your body knows to make more milk when your baby eats or when you pump. It is important not to skip feedings at this time. Remember breast milk is more easily digested than formula, breastfed babies eat more frequently than formula fed babies. Your baby should have 2-6 wet diapers and 2-3 bowel movements in a day. It is okay if your baby has more. Some babies stool with every feeding. Stool should transition from thick, tarry and black to loose, seedy and yellow by day 4.

Mom: Your breasts may feel full and leak. You can use disposable or cloth pads in your bra to help with leaking. Some women like Bamboobies or Lily Padz too.

The First Few Weeks

Milk: White breast milk continues.

Your Baby: Your baby will be much better at breastfeeding. His stomach will be larger to hold more milk. Feedings may be shorter and farther apart.

Mom: Your body should be getting used to breastfeeding so leaking should slow down and your breasts will be softer.