Breastfeeding: Common Questions and Answers

Will it be easy to breastfeed my baby?

Breastfeeding can be tricky at first, as you and your baby both learn to breastfeed. This is normal, so don't give up! Breastfeeding gets easier once you AND your baby get the hang of it. Don't sit and worry--ask for help! You and your baby CAN learn how to breastfeed.

Does breastfeeding hurt?

Breastfeeding should not hurt. If you feel pain, ask WIC or your doctor for a lactation expert who can help your baby latch on properly. This should take care of any pain you feel.

Can I make enough breast milk?

Almost all mothers worry about it, but most mothers can make all the milk their baby needs! Your body starts making milk even when you are 4-5 months pregnant. Most teens can make milk just as well as adults. You can keep making milk by feeding often. So, don't let anyone—other than a medical professional—tell you that you don't have enough milk to breastfeed your baby. If you are worried, get help from WIC or a lactation expert right away!

What are helpful breastfeeding resources?

Ask your case manager to help you fill out the *My Breastfeeding Resources* handout. Keep it somewhere where you can find it easily.

Will my baby get enough breast milk?

Newborns have small stomachs, but they have to double their birth weight in 4 months. As your baby does not eat much at one time, feedings must be frequent (at least 8-12 times per day at first)! Make this easier for you by keeping your baby close by.

Call your baby's doctor if your baby has signs of not getting enough milk. To learn what those signs are, ask your case manager to go over the handout, *Breastfeeding Checklist for My Baby and Me*. Always call the doctor if you are concerned about your baby for any reason.

How can I prepare to start breastfeeding in the hospital?

Tell your doctors you want your baby in your room after birth. Keep your baby on your chest, skin to skin at least the first hour so your baby can get warm, relax and maybe even nurse. Tell your family and friends not to give pacifiers, formula, bottles or anything else to your baby. Try not to give your baby a pacifier or artificial nipple for the first month.

Keep your baby's doctor's appointments. This is a good time to talk to your doctor about how breastfeeding is going. If you are told to feed your baby formula, contact WIC or a lactation expert to get help.

Do I have to go on a special diet to breastfeed my baby?

Breastfeeding does not require a special diet or different foods. Ask your case manager to go over the handout, *Nutrition & Breastfeeding: Common Questions and Answers*, for more information.

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What is colostrum?

The first few days, you will have early milk called colostrum. This milk looks yellow and thick, different from later milk. It comes out in small amounts, so you might not even see it! It is important to feed your baby colostrum because it helps to prevent illness. It will slowly become more watery, so that your baby can learn how to suck, swallow and breathe – and not choke! Your milk will change to mature milk when your baby is about 2 weeks old to meet his or her needs.

Is it normal for breast milk to change in color or smell?

Yes. Your milk might look different in the beginning and end of a feeding, or change from week to week. It can even change color and flavor depending on what you eat. This is normal and is just what your baby needs. In fact, this is one of the special things about breast milk.

Is it possible to breastfeed and go to school or work?

You can still breastfeed while going to school or work. Here are some tips:

- Take as much time off as you can. You and your baby can get to know each other and learn to breastfeed.
- Find out if you can get a breast pump from WIC, your CPSP or health insurance company.
- Practice pumping for a couple of weeks before returning to work or school.
- Pump or hand express when you are away, so that you can keep making milk. Your baby can have that milk when you are not there. If you are working, California law requires your employer to allow you unpaid breaks and a private space for pumping, which is NOT a bathroom. If your school or work is close by, you may be able to go to your baby and breastfeed during breaks.
- Share brochures from www.breastfeedingworks.org/resources with your school or work.

Will breastfeeding take away my freedom?

Being a mother comes with challenges no matter how you feed. If you formula feed, you have to take bottles with you whenever you go out and you have to wash sticky bottles. At night, you have to go to the kitchen and prepare the bottle! Breastfeeding is ready-made food to go.

Won't my family, friends or partner feel left out if I breastfeed my baby?

They can do other things with your baby, such as read, sing, dance, take your baby for walks, and spend some "tummy time" with them. Tell your friends and family why breastfeeding is important for your health and your baby's health. They should be proud of you for breastfeeding.

What if I am embarrassed to breastfeed in public?

If you are embarrassed to breastfeed in public, you are like many others! Try these tips:

- Practice breastfeeding in front of a mirror to find a technique that works for you.
- Breastfeed right before leaving and right after coming home from short trips.
- Wear shirts that pull up from the waist or that can be unbuttoned from the bottom. Use a pretty shawl or baby blanket as a cover-up.
- Breastfeed before your baby cries, so it is not as hard to position him/her.
- Sit in the car, in a changing room, or in a sitting area to breastfeed.
- Pump breast milk at home and use a bottle with expressed milk in public.

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Nutrition & Breastfeeding:

Common Questions and Answers

Will I have to change my diet while breastfeeding?

Breastfeeding does not require a special diet or different foods. Everyone needs to follow a healthy diet of different fruits and vegetables, lean protein, low fat dairy and whole grains every day. The extra calories and nutrients that you need are easy to get when you choose healthy foods and you eat when you are hungry and stop when you are full. You can make a food plan just for you at www.choosemyplate.gov/supertracker-tools/daily-food-plans/moms.html.

Can I go on a diet to lose weight while breastfeeding?

It is not a good idea for breastfeeding women to lose weight quickly. Rapid changes in weight can affect the amount of milk you make. You will lose weight gradually as you make milk for your growing baby. It is best to make slow changes.

To lose weight safely and slowly, limit extra fats and sugars and exercise most days. Skipping meals is not healthy for anyone and can reduce your baby's milk. The more often and longer you breastfeed, the easier it is to lose weight.

Can I eat "junk food" while breastfeeding?

Eating "junk food," such as soda, French fries, sweets and chips will not hurt your baby. Breast milk from mothers who eat "junk food" is better for babies than formula.

Eat healthy foods for yourself. You will lose extra weight faster and you will feel less tired and get sick less often. To make healthier food choices, find out how much fat and sugar is in the foods that you eat. Get quick nutrition information at www.choosemyplate.gov/SuperTracker/foodapedia.aspx.

How much water do I need to drink?

Let your thirst be your guide. Many mothers find they get thirsty when they are breastfeeding, so have a glass of water nearby when you sit down to breastfeed. Mothers who drink too much water can lower their milk supply.

Do I need to drink milk or eat dairy foods to breastfeed?

You do not need to drink milk or eat dairy foods to breastfeed. You do need foods that are high in calcium and vitamin D in your diet while you are breastfeeding and all through your life, for strong and healthy bones. Dairy foods have calcium and as do many green leafy vegetables. Other options are calcium-fortified soy products, canned sardines and salmon. If you do not eat calcium-rich foods, ask your doctor if you need a calcium supplement.

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Can I have caffeine when I'm breastfeeding?

Drinking no more than three 8-ounce cups of coffee early in the day should not affect your baby. If your baby isn't sleeping well or is fussy, cut back on caffeine in coffee, tea, soft drinks, and chocolate. Caffeine can keep you awake, too. Most coffee cups and coffee drinks are larger than 8-ounces (1 cup). Avoid energy drinks.

Is drinking alcohol a good idea when breastfeeding?

In California, the legal drinking age is 21. Drinking alcohol when underage may put you at risk of losing custody of your baby.

Alcohol passes into breast milk and may be harmful for you and your baby. If you do drink alcohol, stop after one drink, and wait at least 3 hours before breastfeeding your baby. One drink of alcohol is 1 beer, 1 ½ ounces alcohol, or 5 ounces wine. If you have one drink and your baby cannot wait 3 hours to feed, give a bottle of warmed-up breast milk from the freezer. If you drink, make sure your baby is being safely cared for.

If you are not using birth control, do not drink alcohol. Alcohol can harm your next baby, even before you know you are pregnant.

Can vegetarians or vegans breastfeed?

Yes. You need protein, not animal products and meat, to make breast milk. Vegetarian and vegan women need to be sure to eat foods rich in vitamin B12, vitamin D, and calcium. Sometimes vegetarians need to take a vitamin, so talk to your doctor about taking one that meets your needs.

Does my baby need vitamin D if I breastfeed?

Yes. Breastfed babies should begin taking 400 IU of vitamin D soon after birth. Talk to your baby's doctor about Vitamin D for your baby as soon as possible. Most breastfed babies do not need any other vitamins.

Do I need vitamins?

Every day, eat a vitamin or cereal that has 400 mcg of folic acid. Your body needs folic acid for healthy hair, nails, skin and overall health. Folic acid also helps prevent serious birth defects that can happen before you know you are pregnant. If you think that you need other vitamins, talk to your doctor or to WIC staff. Even if you take a vitamin, try to eat different colors and textures of fresh and healthy foods every day.

Can I exercise while breastfeeding my child?

Yes. Exercising is part of being healthy. Exercise will not hurt your milk. Remember for your health and safety, start exercising gradually once your doctor says it's OK!

Phone number for a registered dietitian (if needed): _____

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My Breastfeeding Resources

Type of Resource	When to Use this Resource	Specialist/ Organization Name	General Contact Information/ Information about the Resource	Fill in your Local Contact Information (e.g. Phone Number)
Professional Breastfeeding Help	When you need help breastfeeding, have problems with latching on, feel pain, have questions about drug safety, etc.	WIC lactation expert (also called a lactation consultant)	Your local WIC site may have FREE lactation experts. To find the closest WIC, call 1-888-942-9675 or visit www.applications.dhs.ca.gov/wic/resources/laSearch/search.asp	
		Other lactation experts (hospital, private)	To find a lactation expert nearby, visit www.ilca.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3337	
Medical Help	For emergency situations	Emergency Room/ER	Call 9-11.	Call 9-11.
	If you have medical or health concerns for you or your baby.	Primary health care provider (doctor or clinic) for mother or baby	Call your health care provider or you baby's health care provider.	
Nutrition Help	If you have questions or concerns about your diet, weight, or food intake while breastfeeding.	Registered Dietitian	Call your health care provider or your local WIC agency. To find the closest WIC, call 1-888-942-9675 or visit www.applications.dhs.ca.gov/wic/resources/laSearch/search.asp	
Community Breastfeeding Support	When you would like breastfeeding support or to talk about breastfeeding and taking care of babies with professionals and experienced mothers.	La Leche League groups	To find a local La Leche League, visit www.llli.org/Web/California.html	
		WIC peer counseling is offered in some counties	Call your local WIC agency. To find the closest WIC, call 1-888-942-9675 or visit www.applications.dhs.ca.gov/wic/resources/laSearch/search.asp	

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		Other local support groups	Find support groups in your county at www.californiabreastfeeding.org.	
Helplines/ Warmlines	For answers to basic breastfeeding questions. Note: Lines may be temporarily closed or may not be able to provide a response immediately.	National Breastfeeding toll-free helpline	• Call 1-800-994-9662 • TDD for the hearing-impaired is 1-888-220-5446 • Available in English and Spanish M-F 9am-6pm EST	
		La Leche League 24-hour toll-free warmline	Call 1-877-4-LALECHE (1-877-452-5324)	
Milk Banks	To donate or get breast milk (this is a Medi-Cal benefit that requires a doctor's prescription).	Mother's Milk Bank of California	For information: • Visit www.sanjosemilkbank.com • Call 1-408-998-4550 • Email MothersMilkBank@hhs.co.santa-clara.ca.us	
Breastfeeding Pumps/Supplies	To purchase or rent a breast pump.	Local WIC agency	Call your local WIC agency. To find the closest WIC, call 1-888-942-9675 or visit www.applications.dhs.ca.gov/wic/resources/laSearch/search.asp	
		Hospital rental		
		Private rental		
		Local Breastfeeding Coalition	Visit www.californiabreastfeeding.org/memberscounty.html	
Other	For breastfeeding information, tips, and handouts.	California Department of Public Health	Visit http://cdph.ca.gov/breastfeeding	
		California Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	Visit www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/BreastfeedingResourcesforMoms.aspx.	
		Federal Office on Women's Health	Visit http://womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding	

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My Action Plan for Breastfeeding

Name: _____

Check the box for each step you are doing now to prepare for breastfeeding. Check the boxes for the steps you plan to take. Write down other ways you plan to prepare for breastfeeding.

Things that I can do to get ready for breastfeeding	Am Doing	Steps I Will Take
Learn more about breastfeeding by asking questions, attending classes, and reading. Ask my local WIC agency, medical provider, or clinic staff for more information and help.	☐	☐
Attend a breastfeeding support group at WIC, a doctor's office or La Leche League to talk to moms who have breastfeeding experience.	☐	☐
Talk to my family, husband/partner, friends, and my work or school about my plans to breastfeed my baby.	☐	☐
Fill out a birth plan and give it to my doctor. Ask your case manager for a copy of *My Birth Plan.*	☐	☐
Ask that my baby stay in my room after I give birth.	☐	☐
Start breastfeeding in the first hour after delivery.	☐	☐
Avoid pacifier use for the first month.	☐	☐
Complete and save *My Breastfeeding Resources.*	☐	☐
If I have trouble breastfeeding, I will ask for help instead of giving my baby formula.	☐	☐
Give my baby only breast milk for the first six months and try to breastfeed for at least a whole year. If I need to be away from my baby, I can pump breast milk.	☐	☐
Other ideas to help me breastfeed my baby:		
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Breastfeeding Checklist for My Baby and Me

This checklist will help you know things are going well for you and your 4 day to 4 week old baby.
If you have any concerns, call the baby's doctor and a lactation expert.

Check that breastfeeding is going well for you and for your baby.

My baby is over 4 days old and:

- ☐ Breastfeeds at least 8 times in 24 hours.
- ☐ Makes swallowing sounds during most of the feeding.
- ☐ Makes at least 4 dirty diapers in 24 hours.
- ☐ Has dirty diapers that are lighter in color and not so dark and thick.
- ☐ Only breastfeeds and does not take formula or other liquids.

I delivered more than 4 days ago and:

- ☐ I enjoy breastfeeding my baby.
- ☐ Latching baby on to feed is getting easier.
- ☐ After my baby latches on and I count to 10, my nipples do not hurt.
- ☐ My breasts were larger and heavier after delivery.
- ☐ My breasts feel softer after I breastfeed.
- ☐ I believe that breastfeeding is going well.

Check if you and your baby need help with breastfeeding. If you check any of these boxes, contact your baby's doctor or a lactation expert and/or WIC to get help quickly.

My baby is over 4 days old and:

- ☐ Sleeps more than 5 hours at a time
- ☐ Does not wake up to breastfeed at least 8 times every 24 hours.
- ☐ Does not make swallowing sounds during the most of the feeding.
- ☐ Wet diapers are not heavy and have a pink color.
- ☐ Does not make at least 4 dirty diapers in 24 hours.
- ☐ The dirty diapers are dark and thick.
- ☐ Breastfeeds and drinks formula and other liquids.
- ☐ Has yellow colored skin and eyes.

I delivered more than 4 days ago and:

- ☐ My breasts did not get larger and heavier after delivery.
- ☐ Latching baby on is difficult.
- ☐ My breasts do not feel softer after I breastfeed.
- ☐ I worry I don't have enough milk.
- ☐ I can't tell when my baby is hungry and when my baby is full.
- ☐ After my baby latches on and I count to 10, my nipples still hurt.
- ☐ I change sanitary pads every hour because I bleed so much.
- ☐ I do not think breastfeeding is going well.

Baby's Doctor_____ Phone_____
My Doctor_____ Phone_____
Lactation Expert_____ Phone_____
WIC's Phone_____

Baby's Birth Date_____ Baby's Birth Weight_____ Baby's Discharge Weight _____

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My Birth Plan

(For a normal, full-term delivery)

Name: _____

My plan is to:

- ☐ 1. Have my labor start and stop without drugs, unless medically required
- ☐ 2. Have my chosen support people stay with me
- ☐ 3. Drink clear liquids and eat light foods during early labor
- ☐ 4. Move, change positions, take a shower, have a massage and walk, as much as possible during labor
- ☐ 5. Have a Heparin Lock versus a continuous drip IV for quick access in case of an emergency
- ☐ 6. Hold my baby skin-to-skin immediately after birth
- ☐ 7. Have my baby's tests performed while in contact with me so my baby is not taken from me until after he/she has breastfed
- ☐ 8. Have 24-hour rooming in
- ☐ 9. Receive help and education to breastfeed successfully
- ☐ 10. Have my baby brought to me if for some reason he/she is not in my room and is giving hunger cues, such as sucking hands or making sucking sounds, moving the head towards a person or, in very sleepy babies, eye movements under the eyelids <u>before</u> he/she is crying
- ☐ 11. Get an appointment for a health checkup for my baby upon discharge and be given the names of lactation experts, in case I need help with breastfeeding
- ☐ 12. Be given instruction on the use of an electric breast pump if my baby is unable to breastfeed or is separated from me due to a medical condition within 6 hours after delivery

I do <u>not</u> want:

- ☐ A. My bag of waters broken, or to have an episiotomy or other surgery done unless medically necessary
- ☐ B. My baby given a pacifier, bottles, water or formula without my consent and the medical order of his/her doctor

_____ _____

Signature of the patient *Date signed*

Copies for doctor, hospital, clinic and patient

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Mi plan de parto

(Para el parto de un bebé a nacido tiempo completo y saludable)

Nombre: _____

Mi plan es:

- ☐ 1. Permitir que el parto comience y se demore sin el uso de drogas, a menos que sean requeridas por un problema médico
- ☐ 2. Que las personas que yo elija como equipo de apoyo me acompañen durante el parto
- ☐ 3. Ingerir líquidos claros y comidas livianas durante el parto
- ☐ 4. Moverme, cambiar de posición, tomarme una ducha, recibir un masaje o caminar lo más posible durante el parto
- ☐ 5. Tener un acceso a mi vena que me permita moverme y la vez ofrezca acceso rápido en caso de emergencia (Heparin Lock)
- ☐ 6. Poner mi bebé sobre mi pecho, piel a piel en cuanto nazca
- ☐ 7. Que hagan los exámenes de mi bebé mientras esté en contacto conmigo para que no se separe de mí hasta que haya tomado el pecho
- ☐ 8. Tener mi bebé en mi habitación las 24 horas del día
- ☐ 9. Recibir ayuda y educación para lograr dar el pecho efectivamente
- ☐ 10. Si por alguna razón mi bebé no está conmigo, que me lo traigan en cuanto dé señales de tener hambre como: chuparse las manos, hacer ruidos de chupo, mover su cabecita hacia una persona, o, si es muy dormilón, mover sus ojos debajo de los párpados antes que comience a llorar
- ☐ 11. Ya tener una cita para un examen físico de mi bebé al darme de alta y recibir los nombres de personas que me puedan ayudar si necesito ayuda con la lactancia
- ☐ 12. Que si mi bebé no puede tomar pecho o está separado de mí por una condición médica, me ofrecerán un sacaleches e instrucciones para su uso dentro de 6 horas después del parto

No deseo que:

- ☐ A. Me rompan las fuentes o me hagan una episiotomía u otra cirugía a menos que sea por necesidad médica
- ☐ B. Le den un chupón, mamilas, agua o fórmula a mi bebé sin mi permiso y las órdenes del médico

_____ _____

Firma de la paciente *Fecha*

Copias para el médico, el hospital y la paciente

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