



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.

● 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.