

feels soft, with the nipples protruding. These are signs that breastfeeding is going well.

5. Making sure the baby gets enough breast milk

These are some signs that the baby is not getting enough milk:

- Baby's weight does not increase by at least 500 grams in a month, or if weight after 2 weeks is less than birth weight.
- Baby passes small amounts of concentrated urine less than six times a day and the urine is yellow and strong smelling.
- Baby has hard, dry or green stools.
- Baby is not satisfied after breastfeed and often cries; wants to be breastfed very frequently and for very long periods; or refuses to breastfeed.
- No milk comes when the mother tries to express; if the mother's breast did not enlarge or milk did not come out at all.

If a baby shows any of these signs, the mother must try to improve the way she is breastfeeding.

Benefits of Breastfeeding

The best milk for a baby is unquestionably the breast milk. Breastfeeding is a fundamental right of every baby which is important for the growth and development of children as well as important for the health of the mother. Early and exclusive breastfeeding is one of the most important steps towards ensuring newborn health.



1. Why Early Breastfeeding?

- A mother should begin breastfeeding as early as possible preferably within half an hour of delivery, even before the placenta is expelled. In fact early breastfeeding helps the placenta to be delivered easily. It also helps in the early secretion of breastmilk.
- Breastfeeding reduces the risk of excessive bleeding after delivery.
- Newborn baby needs nothing except breast milk. No pre-lacteal feeding is required.
- Early commencement of breast-feeding and frequent suckling on demand will promote milk formation and prevent breast engorgement.
- Early breastfeeding helps to keep the baby warm. The first milk (colostrum) protects the newborn from diseases. Giving colostrums has also been called the “first immunization” of the child.
- Breast milk protects the baby against illnesses and infections. The mother’s defenses against illnesses are passed on to the baby through the breast milk.
- Breastfeeding helps mother and baby develop a close emotional bond.
- The breast milk of the mother of a Low Birth Weight (LBW) baby contains appropriately higher protein and calories and is uniquely suited to provide near optimum nutrition to the LBW baby. Thus, the milk is not only species specific, it is baby specific.

2. Why Exclusive Breastfeeding For 6 Months?

- For a newborn, breast milk is the complete food. It keeps the baby healthy and also protects from infections.
- Upto the age of six months, a newborn should be exclusively breastfed, that is, the baby must be given only breastmilk and nothing else (not even water or honey or gripe water or cow’s milk).
- Giving other foods or fluids can cause infections. For example, germs in bottles can cause diarrhea.
- If the other foods are too dilute, the baby does not get enough nourishment and therefore cannot grow properly.

3. How To Breastfeed

- Breastfeed as often as the baby wants, day or night, and as long as the baby wants. A newborn should be breastfed at least 8-10 times in 24 hours.
- Feeding more often helps in production of milk; the more the baby sucks, the more milk is produced.

4. Correct Breastfeeding Positions

- The baby should be held close to the mother’s body. The baby’s face should face the mother’s breast, with nose opposite the nipple. His/her mouth should be wide open, well attached and covering most of the areola, with lower lip turned outwards.
- The mother should hold the baby in such a way that the baby’s bottom as well as head and shoulders are well supported.
- The mother’s body should be relaxed and comfortable, and she should maintain eye contact with the baby. She may feel her uterus cramping or some milk leaking; after the feed her breast