



Your baby will use special signs (cues) to let you know what they need. You will quickly learn what your baby's cues mean.

Breastfeeding Success – Off to a Good Start

Getting off to a good start

Start breastfeeding your baby right after they are born.

Keep your baby's bed in your room at the hospital and in your bedroom at home. If your baby is near you, it is easier to feed them as soon as they are hungry.

Your baby will show you when they are hungry. Your baby might suck on their hands, move their mouth or eyes, or stretch. Do not wait until your baby is upset and crying to feed them.

Newborns need to breastfeed often. Breastfeed your baby every 2 to 3 hours, day and night, for the first month after they are born. This will help your body make enough milk for your baby. After about a month, your baby will learn to take in more milk with fewer feedings.

Try not to use formula, bottles, or pacifiers for the first month after your baby is born. If you need or choose to give your baby infant formula, talk with your baby's doctor or a breastfeeding specialist before giving infant formula for the first time. Using infant formula while breastfeeding can:

- make your baby less interested in breastfeeding
- decrease your milk supply
- make your baby more susceptible to illnesses

Colostrum is all your baby needs — trust your body

Colostrum is the milk your body makes the first few days after your baby is born. It is usually thick, sticky, and clear to yellow in color. Colostrum coats your baby's insides and helps prevent allergies and illness. Your colostrum is so protective, it acts like your baby's first immunization.

When your baby is first born, your body will make very small amounts of colostrum because your baby's stomach is small. As your baby gets older, their stomach gets bigger and your body makes more breast milk.



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Feed your baby on cue

Your baby will use special signs (cues) to let you know what they need. You will quickly learn what your baby's cues mean.

When your baby wants to eat, they might do one of these things:

- suck on their fists
- turn their head toward you
- stick out their tongue and smack their lips

When your baby is done eating, they might do one of these things:

- fall asleep
- push away from you or the feeding
- stop drinking and let milk spill out from their mouth

It is okay if your baby only eats from one breast at each feeding. You should still offer both breasts each time you breastfeed. This will give you and your baby another chance to work on your position and latch. It can also help you make more milk. Each time you breastfeed, make sure you switch the breast your baby latches to first. This will help you keep a good supply in both breasts.

Other baby cues

Since your baby can't talk yet, they cry to tell you what they need. Crying can mean your baby is hungry. Crying can also mean your baby is tired, needs a clean diaper, or needs to be burped.

If your baby is crying and they weren't using cues to say they were hungry before they started to cry, check to see if there is something else your baby needs.

Help your partner and your family learn what your baby's cues mean.

Find a breastfeeding specialist or support group near you by visiting health.ri.gov/breastfeeding

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