



GET YOUR BABY OFF TO A GOOD START.

All you need to know
about Breastfeeding your
newborn baby.

■ Why Breastfeeding?

For every new mother, Breastfeeding can be an enjoyable, rewarding and a successful experience and no one but your baby benefits more from this. The benefits of breastfeeding are innumerable. It improves your baby's immunity, decreases the chances of diarrhoea and promotes bonding between the mother and the baby. Some studies even suggest that breastfed babies have higher IQ's than formula fed ones.

■ How much milk does one normally produce for the baby?

The flow of milk suddenly increases around the 3rd-4th day and most mothers experience a painful fullness in their breasts called engorgement. At this stage the breasts are quite firm and your baby will find it difficult to suck on them. You may need to empty your breasts manually (or with a pump) a few times to get relief. This stage only lasts for a few days. Most mothers wonder if the amount of milk they are producing is enough for the baby. A baby who sleeps 2-3 hours after a feed has probably had enough milk. If your baby is having 6-8 wet nappies in 24 hours and he/she is gaining about 150 grams a week from day 10 onwards your milk is enough. If you see the baby's stool colour changing from black to mustard yellow over the first 5 days, your feed volumes are adequate. Breast fed babies also pass several stools in a day sometimes after every feed! This frequency gradually declines after the first month.

■ How long should a feed normally last?

Although it is difficult to put a time limit to each feed, most babies normally feed for about 15–20 minutes. One key point to note is to ensure that the first breast is empty before you move your baby to the second breast. The milk that comes towards the end of the feed is called 'hind milk' and is richer in fat. If your baby is sucking for more than 30 minutes at every feed and is not fully satisfied you need to check your feeding technique and make sure you have enough milk.

■ When is the best time to breastfeed?

Breastfeeding is best accomplished with the mother relaxed and comfortable in quiet surroundings without any distractions like telephone, television and overzealous relatives. The mother should prop herself with a pillow next to the headset or on a comfortable recliner.

■ What if the breast milk supply is not sufficient?

In case the breast milk is not enough, you may need an infant milk formula to supplement your feed. Remember breast milk is always the first choice. Read the instructions for feed preparation carefully and sterilize the equipment used for making the feed. We do not recommend using a bottle (especially in the first few weeks) as this is going to confuse your baby. The technique required to feed from the bottle is very different from breast-feeding. Use a spoon instead. Feeding your baby cow's milk, diluted or otherwise, is not recommended till one year of age.

■ Can breast milk be stored in the fridge?

Expressed breast milk can be stored in a sterile bottle (boil the bottle for ten minutes or use a bottle steriliser) in the fridge for 24 hours. Take out the quantity that you require and warm gently by placing the base of the bottle in warm water for 5 minutes. You can also use a bottle warmer. Do not use a microwave to heat milk as this can leave hot pockets of uneven heating and burn your baby's mouth. Always check the milk temperature by placing a few drops on the back of your hand before you start feeding. Once the bottle has been put to baby's mouth it is no longer sterile. This milk must be discarded if not consumed within 1 hour.

■ Is there more I can do to ensure my baby gets the best breast milk?

You need to take good care of your diet. You need more calories while breastfeeding than you did while pregnant. Eat a healthy balanced diet with a combination of fruits, vegetables, dals, paneer /meat (if non-veg) etc. Drink lots of fluids, avoiding carbonated soft drinks. Tea/ coffee should also be kept to the minimum. Go easy on ghee/fatty foods, as you are likely to gain weight without a lot of nutritional value.

For more queries, please feel free to contact your Max paediatrician. Good luck and happy parenting.

List of Paediatric Services

- Paediatric and Neonatal Surgery
- Paediatric Gastrointestinal and Hepatobiliary Surgery
- Paediatric Cardiology (Heart diseases)
- Paediatric Haematology and Oncology (Cancer)
- Paediatric Orthopaedics
- Paediatric Pulmonology (Chest diseases)
- Developmental Paediatrics
- Paediatric Neurology (Brain Disorders)
- Paediatric Endocrinology (Hormonal Disorders)
- Paediatric Nephrology including Dialysis (Kidney diseases)

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