

Getting Breastfeeding Started

peelregion.ca/parenting



William Osler
Health System
Going Beyond



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 **Peel
Region**

Getting breastfeeding started



Feed your baby **only** breast milk for the first 6 months of life.

When baby is ready, begin to feed solid foods and continue to breastfeed for up to 2 years and beyond.

Give baby 400 IU Vitamin D each day.

- Breastfeeding is a skill that both you and your baby may need time to learn.
- This booklet offers tips to help you as you begin to breastfeed your new baby.

To help you decide how to feed your baby, call and speak to a Public Health Nurse at **905-799-7700** or **1-888-919-7800** (toll-free)

Why is breastfeeding important?

For baby:

- Giving only breast milk in the first 6 months of life helps your baby fight infections and develop a strong immune system.
- Breastfed babies are less likely to become obese during childhood.
- Breastfeeding your baby during painful procedures such as blood tests and vaccinations has been shown to decrease your baby's pain.

For mother:

- Women have a lower risk of developing breast cancer when they breastfeed for at least 12 months in their lifetime.

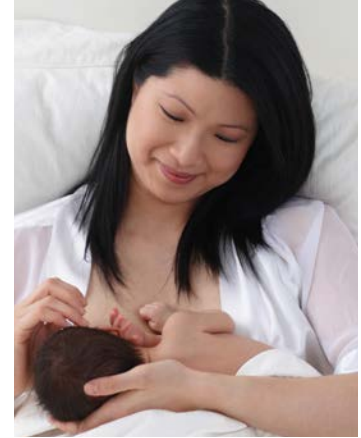
Breast milk is always ready at the right time and temperature.

It is environmentally friendly, convenient and free.

Breast milk changes as your baby feeds and grows. It provides everything baby needs to develop and thrive.



- **Breastfeed** often (8 or more times in 24 hours) to help your body make enough milk for your baby.
- The first milk your breasts make is called colostrum and is very important for your baby.
- After the first few days, your breasts will begin to feel fuller as colostrum is changing into mature milk.
- You may find it helpful to remove milk by hand (hand expression) in addition to breastfeeding your baby (See page 11).
- It is normal for your baby to feed more often at night during the first few days.
- Feed your baby whenever she is showing signs that she is ready to eat.
- You may need to gently wake your baby to feed in the early weeks.



Signs baby is ready to eat:

- opening her mouth as if searching for your breast
- licking lips
- bringing hands to her mouth
- making soft sounds
- crying is a late sign of hunger

Why is colostrum important?

- It is full of nutrients as well as antibodies to help protect your baby from infections.
- Easy to digest.
- Helps baby to pass her first sticky, black stool (called meconium).
- Colostrum comes in small amounts (about 1-2 teaspoons each feeding).
- Ideal for baby's small tummy in the first few days.

Did you know?

Baby may have several feedings in a row within a 3 or 4 hour period.

This cluster feeding helps your body make the right amount of milk for your baby.

What is skin-to-skin?

Baby wears only a diaper and is held in an upright position on mother's or partner's bare chest.

Skin-to-skin contact:

- Helps baby adjust to life outside the womb.
- Helps baby breathe normally.
- Keeps baby warm.
- Helps mother make breast milk by encouraging baby to feed often and well.
- Soothes and comforts baby and relaxes mother.
- Helps you and your baby get to know each other.

Trust yourself – bringing baby to breast often, makes more milk.

Trust your body – removing breast milk by hand also makes more milk.

Remember to: Hold baby skin-to-skin and breastfeed as soon as possible after birth.



Breastfeeding positions

- A comfortable position is one that is pain-free and relaxed.
- Find a good position that works for you and your baby.
- This position may change as your baby grows.

- Your baby's mouth faces your breast. Avoid having your baby on her back.
- Your baby's ear, shoulder and hip need to be in a straight line.
- Support your baby with one arm and use your other hand to support your breast.

Cross cradle hold

Works well for young babies.



Football hold

Works well for small babies, for women with large breasts or after a caesarean birth.



Cradle hold

Most familiar position but it is best used by mothers who are experienced with breastfeeding.



Side-lying

Takes practice but can be a comfortable position for mother and baby.

How your baby breastfeeds will change over time.
FREE breastfeeding help is available through Peel Public Health

Other positions to try

Below your breast



- Lean back and get comfortable with good arm and body support.
- Place baby tummy down on your body.
- Baby lies on your chest at any angle.
- Gravity keeps baby close to you.

Across your body



Source: Reprinted with permission by Nancy Mohrbacher (Illustrations by Allan Moon)

Watch breastfeeding instructional videos at peelregion.ca/parenting (available in 7 languages).

Latching **your** baby

1. Baby starts to look for your nipple.
2. When she feels your breast touch her chin, she will open her mouth.
3. Point your nipple towards the roof of baby's mouth with baby's head tilted back.
4. As you pull baby onto your breast, she takes your breast and begins to suckle.
5. Look for a wide open mouth with lips curled outwards, chin pressed firmly against your breast and baby's nose tilted slightly away from your breast.

If your breasts feel hard and latching is difficult, try the following before feeding to soften the breasts:

- Cool compress to decrease swelling **OR** warm shower/compresses to help soften breast.
- Massage breast gently and hand express some milk.



Signs your baby is breastfeeding well

- As baby starts to feed, she will suck quickly to make your milk flow.
- You will notice slow, deep sucks as your baby begins to drink your breast milk.
- Her swallowing will sound like a soft “kuh kuh.”
- You feel baby pulling on your breast without pain.
- Your breasts feel softer after feeding.
- Your baby is content and settled between most feeds.
- Your baby is having the right amount of wet and dirty diapers (urine and stools). Keep track and compare to the guidelines on page 10.
- Baby may lose weight in the first few days. Your baby begins to gain weight on Day 4 and regains her birth weight by 10-14 days of age.

What if I have to give my baby formula?

If possible, avoid giving formula for the first 6 weeks until you feel comfortable breastfeeding. When your baby misses feedings at the breast, your body will make less milk.

If your Health Care Provider asks you to give your baby formula, speak to a Public Health Nurse about how to protect your milk supply.

Get help if:

- You are having difficulty latching your baby to your breast.
- Your baby is not having enough wet or dirty diapers.
- Your baby is not gaining weight after the first few days.
- You are concerned about your baby's feedings or your breast milk supply.
- Your nipples are sore.
- You notice a red, tender, hot area on your breast.

During **growth spurts**, your baby will grow quickly and want to breastfeed more often than usual. This may happen around 7-10 days, 3 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months and 6 months of age. The more you feed your baby, the more milk you will make!

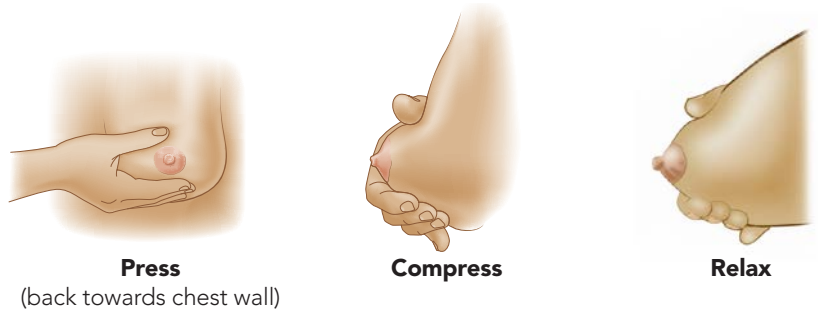
Guidelines for breastfeeding mothers

Your Baby's Age	1 WEEK							2 WEEKS	3 WEEKS
	1 DAY	2 DAYS	3 DAYS	4 DAYS	5 DAYS	6 DAYS	7 DAYS		
How often should you breastfeed? Per day, on average over 24 hours	        At least 8 feeds per day (every 1 to 3 hours). Your baby is sucking strongly, slowly, steadily and swallowing often.								
Your baby's tummy size	 Size of a cherry		 Size of a walnut		 Size of an apricot		 Size of an egg		
Wet diapers: How many, how wet Per day, on average over 24 hours	 At least 1 WET	 At least 2 WET	 At least 3 WET	 At least 4 WET	 At least 6 HEAVY WET WITH PALE YELLOW OR CLEAR URINE				
Soiled diapers: Number and colour of stools Per day, on average over 24 hours	 At least 1 to 2 BLACK OR DARK GREEN		 At least 3 BROWN, GREEN, OR YELLOW		 At least 3 large, soft and seedy YELLOW				
Your baby's weight	Most babies lose a bit of weight in the first 3 days after birth.				From Day 4 onward, most babies gain weight regularly Following a caesarean birth, baby may not begin to gain weight until day 5.				
Other signs	Your baby should have a strong cry, move actively and wake easily. Your breasts feel softer and less full after breastfeeding.								

Expressing breast milk by hand

(Adapted/Reprinted with permission from the Best Start Resource Centre)

- Use a clean container with a wide opening to collect the expressed milk.
- Wash your hands thoroughly.
- Remove any restrictive clothing and bra.
- Choose an environment and position that is relaxing for you.
- Apply warmth and gently massage your breasts before you hand express to help your breast milk flow.



- Gently lift your breast, positioning your thumb on top of your breast and first two fingers underneath, about 1 to 1 ½ inches (2 ½ to 4 cm) back from the nipple.
- Once positioned, press back towards the chest, compress and relax your fingers; repeat, moving thumb and fingers around the breast.
- When milk flow slows, switch to the other breast and repeat sequence of position, press back, compress and relax.
- When you are first learning to hand express, you may only get a few drops of breast milk.
- Practice and experience will increase the flow.
- It may be easier to express in the morning, when your breasts feel fullest, or right after you breastfeed baby.

Call Peel Public Health at **905-799-7700** or visit [peelregion.ca/parenting](https://www.peelregion.ca/parenting) for more tips on expressing breast milk.

Storing breast milk

Expressed breast milk can be stored for use when mother and baby are separated or unable to breastfeed.

Choose one of the following containers:

- First Choice – glass containers with a tight lid (for example, small jars and bottles with lids).
- Second Choice – hard plastic containers/bottles free of Bisphenol A (BPA-free).
- Third Choice – breast milk freezer bags. Do not use bottle liner bags because they are thinner and can tear with freezing.

Cleaning equipment

- For healthy, full-term babies receiving breast milk, wash containers in hot, soapy water and rinse well with hot water. Let the containers air dry and then cover them. It is unnecessary to sterilize items.
- If your baby is premature (born early) or is in the hospital, speak to a health care provider who has breastfeeding expertise about cleaning containers to store breast milk.

Storage guidelines

- Store in 60–120 ml (2–4 ounces) portions to prevent wasting milk.
- Always cool freshly expressed milk before adding it to already cooled or frozen milk.
- Always add a smaller amount of cooled milk to frozen milk.
- Leave a 2.5 cm (1 inch) space at the top of the container when freezing.
- Do not refreeze breast milk once it is thawed.
- Place containers at the back of the fridge or freezer where it is the coldest.
- Label the container with the date the breast milk was expressed.
- After the storage time has passed, discard the milk.

How long can I store my breast milk?

The following guidelines apply to mothers who have a healthy, full-term baby and are storing their milk for home use.

Place	Temperature	Storage Time
Room temperature	$\leq 25^{\circ}\text{C}$ or 77°F	6 to 8 hours
In refrigerator	$\leq 4^{\circ}\text{C}$ or 40°F	5 days
 Freezer with a 2-door refrigerator	-18°C or 0°F	3 to 6 months
Deep freeze 	-20°C or -4°F	6 to 12 months
Previously frozen breast milk (in the refrigerator)	$\leq 4^{\circ}\text{C}$ or 40°F	24 hours
Insulated cooler with ice pack		24 hours

Thawing frozen breast milk



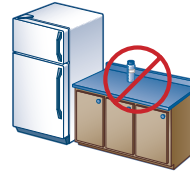
1. Check the date on the stored breast milk. Use the container with the earliest date.



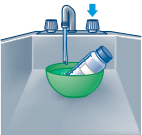
4. Warm breast milk by placing container in a bowl of very warm water.



2. Thaw frozen breast milk by leaving it in the fridge for 4–24 hours **OR**...



5. Never thaw at room temperature.



3. Place container under cool running water. Once it has begun to thaw, run warm water to finish thawing.



6. **DO NOT** heat on stove or in microwave oven.

Recovery from your birth

Whether you are recovering from a vaginal birth or you've had a caesarean birth, you may be experiencing discomfort and find moving around difficult.



Did you know?

- There is pain medication that is safe to take while breastfeeding.
- Relaxation methods may help you feel more comfortable.
- Hormones released during breastfeeding help you to relax.
- It is normal to have afterpains, a type of contraction, while breastfeeding.

When your baby is born by caesarean:

- Understand that you have had major surgery and it will take time to recover.
- It is important to get up, move around and do deep breathing exercises to reduce complications after surgery.
- It can be helpful to have someone assist you both in hospital and at home.

Early skin-to-skin and breastfeeding is possible even after a caesarean birth.

What can partner do?

Get to know your new baby

Hold baby skin-to-skin and enjoy spending time with mom and baby.

- Learn to recognize when baby is ready to eat.
- Bring baby to mom and help with positioning baby at breast.
- Burp baby and change baby's diapers.
- Hold baby after feedings to help settle baby.
- Know the signs that show your baby is breastfeeding well.
- Take over as many household chores as possible.
- Support mom if family and/or friends challenge her decision to breastfeed.

Family support and encouragement helps a mother to breastfeed.



Adjusting to parenthood

- The first days home from the hospital are an important time of adjustment and you aren't expected to know everything.
- All new parents find this period of time challenging – physically and emotionally.
- Caring for a new baby means not only less sleep, but also less time to spend with your partner.
- Be patient with each other as you adjust to your new roles.
- Rest when baby is sleeping; let the household tasks wait.

When baby cries

Crying is the only way your baby can express feelings like hunger, discomfort, tiredness and loneliness.

Babies can begin to have fussy periods with crying that starts around 2-3 weeks, peaks at 6 weeks and goes away by 3-4 months of age.

Comforting your baby teaches her that you are there to meet her needs. Even an older baby enjoys being held skin-to-skin.



Never shake your baby

Ask a family member or a friend that you trust to look after your baby if you feel you need a break.

Spending as much time with your baby as possible develops confidence in responding to baby's needs.

Where to get breastfeeding help

Peel Public Health offers FREE

- Breastfeeding help from a Public Health Nurse in person or by telephone
- Breastfeeding Companions – peer support
- Healthy Babies Healthy Children – in home support from a Public Health Nurse and Family Visitor about feeding, parenting, growth and development and community resources
- Telephone support from a Public Health Nurse about feeding, parenting, programs and resources
- Online parenting information and videos

Call: **905-799-7700** or **1-888-919-7800** (toll-free)

Other resources

- **Health 811** – dial 811 (TTY 1-866-797-0000)
- ontariobreastfeeds.ca for breastfeeding services near you
- **Mother to Baby** 1-866-626-6847 (information about medications in pregnancy and lactation)
- **La Leche League** 1-800-665-4324
- Other Public Health Departments
 - Halton **905-825-6000**
 - Toronto **416-338-7600**
 - Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (Orangeville) **1-800-265-7293**