



Breastfeeding Newsletter

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The Importance of a Good Start

At the beginning of a new year, people like to start things off on a positive note, whether that's with a party, a resolution to improve themselves somehow, or just by reflecting on what they have learned in the past year. A good start to the year is important to most people. Breastfeeding should be the same! Breastfeeding your baby is a journey that will be different for every mother. It's a journey filled with joy, love, surprises, an occasional roadblock, but many rewards. The beginning of this journey can greatly influence the end. A good start to breastfeeding can set a mother up for breastfeeding ease and success for many months.

Before you have your baby, it's beneficial to know the resources available should you need help with breastfeeding. The WIC program has great resources for breastfeeding moms. From information via books and pamphlets, to breast pumps and a listening ear, we have virtually everything you may need (except for the breast and the baby!) to make breastfeeding successful. It's okay if you don't know everything about breastfeeding as long as you know where you can go to get the details. The peer counselor program at WIC allows moms to learn as they go and gain support from someone who's been there. Also check with your doctor or hospital to learn about breastfeeding classes and if an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) will be available to you during and after the birth of your baby. Most hospitals have one and are eager to assist you.

Part of educating yourself in order to be successful includes learning about potential roadblocks. The first few days and weeks after baby arrives finds most moms tired and unsure of themselves. Moms want to give their baby the very best and are often confused when breastfeeding doesn't go as anticipated. Then they tend to second guess themselves. Here are the common perceived roadblocks and ways to forge ahead.

- "I don't have enough milk!" on Day 1. Yes you do! Well, technically, no you don't. You have colostrum, not milk. And you have just enough for your baby's tiny stomach. Colostrum is concentrated food that comes in small amounts before breastmilk arrives. Mothers start making colostrum while they are pregnant and it is ready for baby after birth. You see, your baby's stomach is only the size of a marble the day he's born, so he doesn't need a lot of milk right away. He just needs to snuggle up to mommy for comfort and learn to drink from the breast. And he needs to do it often, with his first try being sometime in the first hour or two after he's born. Ask for your baby to be put skin-to-skin immediately after birth and wait for him to start rooting around, then gently guide him to your nipple. If he doesn't soon figure it out, relax, and ask the nurse to either help you or find someone who can, such as the IBCLC they probably have on staff.
- "My baby is hungry all the time! I must not have enough milk!" on Day (or

A few reasons to take the breastfeeding journey:

1. *Breastmilk protects your baby from illnesses.*
2. *Breastfeeding helps you bond with your baby.*
3. *Breastmilk can increase your baby's IQ.*
4. *Breastmilk is easier to digest than formula.*
5. *Breastfeeding is relaxing.*
6. *Breastfeeding helps the uterus shrink back to normal size and assists in losing pregnancy weight.*
7. *Breastfeeding is great for the environment!*

Night) 2. Somewhere around the second day your baby may seem to cry and fuss almost constantly for the breast. You will be bone tired and desperate for sleep, but your baby is now wakeful for the first time since birth. He wants his mommy because this outside world is quite different from your cozy womb! This need of his to be at the breast seemingly constantly will probably not last even 12 hours. But those hours can be difficult yet critical for breastfeeding success. This is when mommy needs to forge ahead and give baby what he needs because it will pay off later! All that sucking is sending messages to your body to make milk. That tiny stomach of his empties fast and he's still practicing that suck he plans on using for many months. You can also look at it as your baby "putting in his order for later;" make sure you let him! Don't pacify him with anything other than your breasts. Feed your baby when he demands to be fed.

- "Ouch! Too much milk!" sometime between day 2 and 6. All that milk your baby ordered has now come in and your breasts don't seem to know what to do with it all, and you're unsure if your baby is getting any of it. They feel very full that they may even hurt a little bit to touch, and they make leak some. Congratulations! You have milk! And until your body figures out exactly how much your baby needs, you can ease the "full feeling" by trying warm compresses with a wet washcloth before feedings only, hand expression to soften the breast so baby can latch on(ask your peer counselor or lactation consultant how to do this if unsure), warm showers, and most importantly, frequent feedings. Since day one, your baby should already be eating every 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 hours with one stretch of sleep for 4-5 hours allowable once every night. Aim to feed your baby 8-12 times per day. Err on the side of feeding more often rather than feeding less often. And count baby's full diapers and compare to the guidelines they gave you when you left the hospital.
- "I'm running out of milk!" on day 7-14. No you aren't. As long as baby has been eating and gaining weight so far, you still have plenty of milk. Your body has just figured out how to manufacture it more conveniently. Your breasts feel lighter and less full, your baby is still eating 8-12 times per day, and he's still going through all those diapers like crazy. Don't doubt yourself now! You are just now beginning the best part of the breastfeeding journey which can last for as long as you like because you've made it past the hardest part. Just keep at it, and if any problems arise, call your peer counselor, lactation consultant, or doctor.

Once you learn the benefits of breastfeeding and decide it's to go for it, the only thing that can stop you from success is yourself. Breastfeeding is something only YOU can do for your baby and is your decision to make. Others can help you, guide you, educate you, and support you, but only YOU can make it happen. What a gift to give your child!

Happy New Year, and Happy Breastfeeding!

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