

# COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT BREASTFEEDING

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## **Can I breastfeed if my baby is premature?**

Yes, breast milk is good for premature babies.

## **How do I know if my breast milk provides enough food for my baby?**

In the first few days after birth, your breasts produce a special substance called colostrum that provides complete nutrition for your baby. In a few days, your milk will come in. You can tell if your baby is getting enough breast milk if she has loose, bright yellow bowel movements by day 5. Breast milk is all a baby needs for the first 6 months of life. Breastfeeding should continue with the addition of complementary food for 12 months and as long after as mom and baby desire.

## **How often do I need to feed my baby?**

During the early weeks of breastfeeding, breastfeed 8 to 12 times every 24 hours. Nurse whenever your baby shows early signs of hunger (increased alertness, physical activity, mouthing, rooting).

## **Should I give my baby water?**

No, do not give your breastfeeding baby water or any other fluid. Breast milk is all your baby needs.

## **What do I do if my breasts become swollen and tender?**

Full breasts when your milk comes in after birth are normal. Engorgement is when the fullness causes discomfort or pain. Engorgement usually lasts less than 24 hours. If this happens, you should:

- Breastfeed more.
- If your baby does not nurse long enough to soften both breasts, hand express or pump milk after nursing.
- Apply cold compresses (a bag of frozen peas works well) between feedings until swelling begins to subside.
- Use a pump to relieve the pressure.

## **What do I do about sore nipples?**

Nipples most often get sore when baby is poorly positioned during feedings or is incorrectly latched on. Be sure your baby is taking as much areola into her mouth as possible. If your nipples do get sore, it helps to:

- Get help with the latch and position.
- Breastfeed on the least painful side first.
- Coat your nipples with breast milk after feedings or lanolin and let them air dry.

## **Can I continue to breastfeed if I get mastitis?**

Yes, you should continue to breastfeed. Mastitis is an infection in the breast. Breastfeeding will empty the affected breast, which is important in treating mastitis. Contact your doctor if you have breast pain and flu-like achiness and fever.