

## #3 THE ART OF BREASTFEEDING & AVOIDING DIFFICULTIES

Carol Meredith  
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### How to Know if Your Baby is Getting Enough Milk

- In 24 hours - 6 or more wet diapers & 2 or more bowel movements.
- Weight gain 4 or more ounces a week.
- Is he happy, healthy & thriving?
- It may take a while for the two of you to become comfortable and efficient.
- At about 2 weeks of age, 6 weeks & 3 months, your baby will have growth spurts. He will start to feed very often & you may feel as if he's not getting enough. Instead of giving a bottle, offer him the breast. The more he feeds the more milk you will make for him. If you give a bottle of formula, your body will think he's not hungry and will make less milk. Remember - the more your baby nurses, the more milk your body will make.
- Breastfed babies usually grow slower than formula fed babies - don't compare your baby's weight to another baby who's bottle fed.
- A few babies who are only receiving mother's milk may gain very quickly - you can't overfeed a totally breastfed baby.

### How to Avoid Difficulties

- Sore nipples can be avoided – make sure he takes the whole nipple and some of the areola (the dark area around the nipple) to make it more comfortable. Hold him on his side with his face towards the breast. He can't swallow properly if he's laying on his back with his head turned to the side. Offer the least sore side first. Nurse more often, not less, so he isn't so hungry. Allow the nipples to air dry.
- Your arm will get tired, your baby may pick up on this and not nurse well – support your arm on something firm.
- After a few days when your milk comes in, your breasts will probably get very full very quickly. Avoid the discomfort of engorgement by nursing as often as you like, massage the breast very gently or stand in a comfortably hot shower and allow the milk to flow.
- If your baby isn't gaining well, instead of giving formula, increase his feedings. Each time the milk "lets down", the breast makes high fat milk. If you switch your baby from one breast to the other and back again, the milk will "let down" each time you change sides prolonging the length of time he's getting high fat milk.
- Sleepy baby – wake him if necessary to nurse, remove his clothes & hold him skin to skin.
- Fussy baby – may have colic, he cannot be allergic to your milk but may react to something in your diet (cow's milk?), burp him often, use a baby carrier, hold him as if you're holding a football with his belly down against your forearm & his head by your elbow, ask for help from your support person. Hold him close, rock him, sing to him, dance with him.
- Nighttime needs – babies need to be fed during the night, keep your baby close to you so you're disrupted as little as possible. Lay down to nurse (make sure he's safe). As he gets older, he may nurse while you're asleep.

### Special Situations

- Jaundice - some babies develop jaundice soon after birth, increase breastfeeding in addition to any treatment that's recommended.
- Teething – the discomfort of teething may cause him to bite, usually at the end of a feeding. Be alert for when this might happen. Pull him in close or break the suction. End the feeding but don't reprimand him, give him something suitable for teething to bite on.
- If your baby becomes ill – continue to breastfeed, it may be the only food he can tolerate, he will need the nutrition and comforting that breastfeeding provides.
- If you become ill – continue to breastfeed, keep the supplies you need close by, it's easier to take care of a breastfed baby. Ask your support person to help you.
- Breast infection – caused by a plugged duct, continue to breastfeed especially on the affected side, rest, drink fluids, apply heat, take a comfortably hot shower, change positions to help clear all the ducts, wear a well-fitting bra that is not tight.
- Nursing strike – babies sometimes stop nursing suddenly after a few months but they're not weaning, maybe they have an ear infection or other illness or are upset.

- Going out with your baby – breastfed babies are portable, don't be afraid to feed him in public, be discreet but don't hide, wear clothes that make it easier, carry him "kangaroo-style" in a baby carrier.

This guide is intended for informational purposes & is not to take the place of medical advice. As with any medical problems, follow the recommendations of your health provider, but stay in touch with your local La Leche League Leader.

#### For More Information

- La Leche League – non-profit organization that promotes breastfeeding, [www.LLLI.org](http://www.LLLI.org)
- <https://www.llli.org/resources/>
- <https://www.llli.org/get-help/breastfeeding-support-facebook-group/>
- <https://www.llli.org/receive-newsletter/>
- <https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/>