

The First Six Weeks

Breast milk is the best food you can give to your baby. Breast milk is a complete food source, containing all the nutrients your baby need - at least 400 of them to be exact, including hormones and disease fighting compounds that aren't found in formula.

The nutritional makeup in breast milk will adjust to your baby's needs as he or she grows and develops. Aside from the brain building, infection fighting benefits of breast milk, which no formula can match, nursing will also help to build a special bond between you and your baby. When nursing, your child thrives on the contact, cuddling, and holding - which you will as well.

Since breast feedings can take up to 40 minutes or more, you should pick a cozy spot for nursing. The atmosphere is very important, even more so in the early days of breast feeding when you're still trying to get the hang of it. If you get easily distracted by noise, go somewhere quiet.

You should always hold your baby in a position that won't leave your arms or back sore. It works the best to support the back of your baby's head with your hand, although which position you choose depends on what's more comfortable to you.

When supporting your baby, a nursing pillow can sometimes be a big help. You should never feed until both you and your baby are comfortable. Pay attention to how your breasts feel when your baby latches on, as his mouth should cover most of the areola below the nipple, and the nipple should be far back into your baby's mouth.

While some women adjust to breast feeding easily, other moms find it hard to learn. If you feel discouraged, always know that you aren't the only one. Everyone feels different when starting, it

all depends on the mother and the situation.

Breast feeding will take practice. Therefore, you should give yourself as much time as you need to get it down to second nature. Always take it one feeding at a time. If you are having a bad day, tell yourself that it'll get better. Keep in mind that any problems are temporary, as you'll be nursing like a pro by your six week postpartum checkup.

The first six weeks will be both an adventure and training. You can't expect to know everything when you begin, which is where training and practice will really help you excel. The more you breast feed, the more you'll learn. You'll also build a bond with your baby - which is something you'll always have for the rest of your lives.

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