

# Breastfeeding

## The natural way to feed your baby

Until around six months of age, breast milk is the only food or drink your baby needs.

### Why breastfeed?

#### For baby

- keeps baby healthy and strong
- helps mum and baby feel close
- helps to fight sickness
- helps to prevent health problems later in life.

#### For mum

- helps recovery from giving birth
- helps mum and baby feel close
- helps to prevent health problems later in life
- breast milk is free and does not need any preparation.

Try to breastfeed your baby for the first 12 months. Any breastfeeding is good for both you and your baby. From then on breastfeed for as long as you and your baby are happy to.



### How many breastfeeds does your baby need?

- Breast milk is made when your baby feeds. The more your baby feeds the more milk is made.
- A baby's stomach is very small, so it is common for new babies to feed often. In the first few weeks of life babies may feed 8 to 12 times in 24 hours.
- As your baby grows this will change. Older babies will feed less often and get faster at feeding.
- Remember all babies are different.
- If your baby has about six or more wet nappies in 24 hours and is growing, your baby is having enough to drink.
- A young baby will usually have three or more soft and runny bowel motions each day for several weeks. An older baby is likely to have fewer bowel motions.

## If you are breastfeeding

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink lots of water.
- Limit caffeine intake.
- Eat a variety of foods from the five food groups. This means foods made from grains, vegetables, fruit, meat and meat alternatives and dairy foods.
- Take an iodine supplement with 150 micrograms of iodine per day.
- The safest option is not to drink alcohol.

## Expressing and storing breast milk

- Expressing breast milk can be useful if you are away from your baby for any reason.
- Breast milk can be expressed by hand or by using a manual or electric breast pump.
- see Expressing Breast milk

## Want to know more

Ask your GP or child health nurse.

Breastfeeding 24 hour Helpline

1800 mum 2 mum (1800 686 268)