



Healthy Child Manitoba  
Putting children and families first

# Breastfeeding Your Baby



In Manitoba, your right to breastfeed anywhere  
is protected by the Charter of Human Rights.

**Manitoba** 

# Importance of Breastfeeding

- Breastfeeding is important for your health and for your baby's growth and development.
- Breastmilk is all your baby needs for the first 6 months. Water, juice, sugar water, formula, cereal and other foods are not needed during this time.
- All babies need vitamin D drops (400-800 I.U. a day). Talk to your health care provider for more information.
- Infants who are breastfed receive protection from serious health conditions including respiratory, ear, gastrointestinal tract infections, allergies, diabetes and obesity. It can also reduce the incidence of SIDS.
- Breastfeeding benefits mothers by reducing the risk of breast and ovarian cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- Breastfeeding is recommended for the first 2 years and beyond, with the addition of complementary foods after 6 months.



**Did you know?** Spending the first hour after birth skin-to-skin with your baby helps him or her stay warmer, calmer and breastfeed better than babies who are swaddled or wrapped. Holding your baby skin-to-skin in the days and weeks after birth helps him or her grow and increases your milk supply.

# Getting Started

It takes time to learn how to breastfeed. You and your baby are learning something new and there may be bumps along the way. Keep at it, and know that by breastfeeding, you are giving your baby a great start.

To ensure your baby is feeding well, he or she must be well-latched. The following things happen when the baby is well-latched:

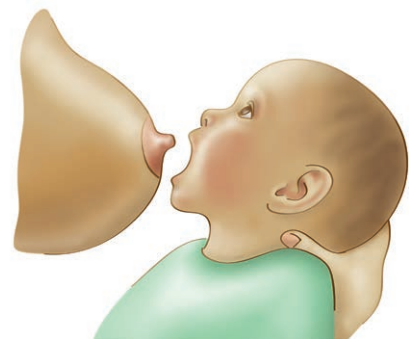
- You can see the baby's mouth open wide to take the breast; the baby's chin is touching your breast and the nose is slightly away from the breast.
- Your baby's lips are rolled out and relaxed.
- Your baby sucks quickly, then more slowly with short pauses; you feel a tug on the nipple after the initial latch.
- After the first few days of feeding, you can hear your baby swallow.
- Your nipples should not hurt.
- After breastfeeding, your nipples look rounded, not flattened.

Every baby is different in the number of feedings he or she needs per day; however, all babies need to feed at least 8 or more times in 24 hours.

Most babies will "cluster" feed (have several feeds in a short time).

Always let your baby take the lead. Watch your baby for early hunger signs and comfort needs.

Speak to your Public Health Nurse, midwife or other healthcare provider for more information about ways to hold your baby while breastfeeding.



## Signs that your baby is hungry:

- sucks on fingers, hands or tongue
- smacks lips
- searches (or roots) for breast
- wakes from sleep

It's important to watch for these signs. Waiting until your baby is crying may make breastfeeding difficult.



## Signs that your baby is full:

- stops....lets go of breast and may turn head away
- feels settled and relaxed
- arms and legs are stretched out
- fingers are spread out







**Did you know?** Pacifiers (soothers), or bottle nipples, may interfere with breastfeeding by decreasing the time your baby spends at your breast and affecting how the baby sucks.

## Signs your newborn baby is breastfeeding well:

- Babies usually lose a bit of weight during the first few days after birth. Most babies begin to gain weight when they are about 5 days old, and return to their birth weight by 2 weeks of age.
- During the first weeks, your breasts feel full before you feed and soften after nursing. After a few weeks, you may not notice the full feeling – don't worry, as this doesn't mean you're not producing enough milk. It simply means your milk supply has adjusted to your baby's needs.
- Babies often gain between 4 to 7 ounces (120 - 210 grams) or more per week for the first 4 months.
- Frequent wet and soiled (poopy) diapers let you know your baby is getting enough breastmilk (see chart on the next page).

**Note:** If your baby falls asleep after only a few minutes at the breast, squeeze the breast tissue behind the areola (the dark area around your nipple), which should make the baby more alert and increase the amount of milk he or she drinks.

# What to Expect

Your baby's age	1 Day	2 Days	3 - 4 Days	5 - 7 Days	2 To 3 Weeks	4 Weeks To 6 Months
Size of baby's tummy	 Dime		 Quarter	 Toonie	 Egg	
How often should you breastfeed?	Small tummies need to be fed often. Breastfeed when your baby shows signs of hunger—a minimum of 8 or more times in 24 hours.					
How many wet diapers? (every 24 hours)	1	2	3	4	5	6 (7 days - 6 months)
How many soiled (poopy) diapers? (every 24 hours)	1 to 2 (colour is black or dark green)		2 to 3 (colour is brown, green or yellow)	At least 3 large bowel movements (poops) (yellow in colour)		At least 1 large bowel movement every 1 to 7 days (yellow in colour)

**Did you know?** *If you have a child who is breastfeeding and you get pregnant, you can continue to breastfeed. It will not harm the baby growing inside of you.*

# Expressing and Storing Breastmilk

For most mothers, the easiest and most effective way to feed your baby breastmilk is at the breast. It is best to breastfeed exclusively for the first four to six weeks to ensure that your milk supply is established. There may be occasions when this is not possible and you will need to express your milk. You can express your milk manually (by hand) or use a breast pump.

## Expressing your milk manually (by hand):

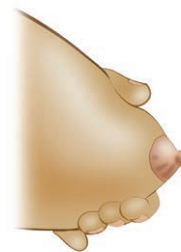
- Wash your hands.
- Place your fingers on opposite sides of the dark area around your nipple called the areola.
- Press back toward your chest.
- Gently squeeze your fingers together.
- Release pressure and relax your hand.
- Repeat several times.
- Don't expect drops of milk immediately.
- Massage your breasts whenever you feel the need to.
- Shift your hand to a different position to move milk from other ducts (thin tubes that carry milk from breast glands to nipple).
- Repeat, moving thumb and fingers around the breast; position, press back towards your chest, compress (squeeze) and relax.
- Switch breasts every few minutes to get more milk.
- You can cup or spoon-feed expressed breastmilk.



Press behind nipple and areola



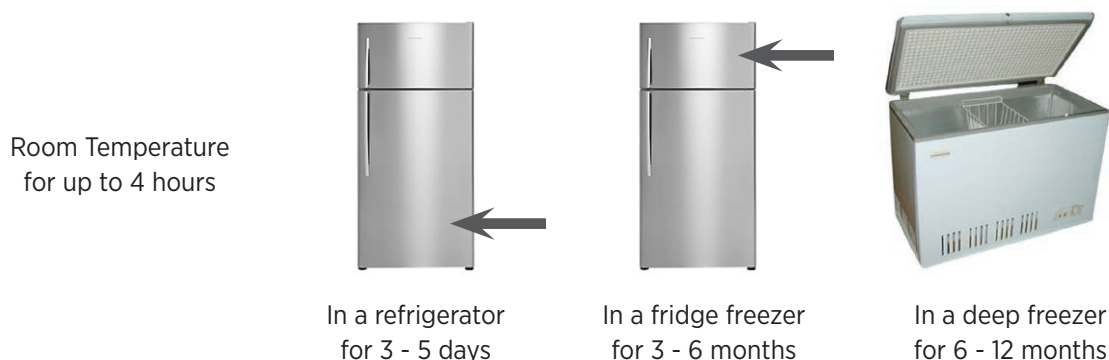
Compress



Relax

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## How to store breastmilk



- Freeze milk in 2 to 4 ounce (60 – 120 ml) quantities so you can thaw and warm it quickly.
- Breastmilk must be stored in a sterilized container.
- To sterilize a container: Place container in a pot of water. The water should completely cover the container. Cover the pot and bring water to a boil. Continue boiling for two minutes. Let cool and remove container with sterilized tongs or other sterilized utensils.
- You can also use milk storage bags or freezer milk bags specifically designed for freezing and storing breastmilk.
- Label the stored milk with the day, month and year.

## How to use frozen breastmilk

- Place frozen milk under cold running water until thawed, or thaw frozen milk in the fridge for several hours before it is needed.
- To warm breastmilk, place container in a bowl of warm water. Never heat breastmilk in the microwave because it can cause hot spots that can burn the baby's mouth and affect the quality of the milk.
- Thawed breastmilk should be refrigerated and used within 24 hours. Do not refreeze.
- Frozen milk can separate when thawed, so shake the container gently.

## You should get help with breastfeeding when:

- your baby still has dark green, almost black bowel movements (poop) after he or she is 5 days old
- your baby is having fewer than 3 wet diapers after 3 days
- breastfeeding hurts
- you have trouble getting your baby to latch on or stay latched on
- your nipples are sore or cracked
- your breasts have lumps or reddened areas
- you don't hear your baby swallow or you don't see milk in your baby's mouth
- your baby is sleepy at the breast or difficult to wake up for feedings
- your baby is not feeding at least 8 times in 24 hours during the first three weeks
- your baby's skin colour has become yellow or more yellow than it was
- your baby is fussy and will not calm down or pulls on and off the breast over and over
- if you are worried your baby is not getting enough milk





# Caring for Mom

Parenting is hard work. It can be difficult to find time to take care of yourself. Keep your energy levels up by remembering to eat and drink regularly throughout the day. Include a variety of foods from Canada's Food Guide to boost energy and stay healthy.

Here are some things you can do to take care of yourself:

- Rest when able.
- Ask for help.
- Include your partner and other family supports in the care of your baby. They can burp, diaper, change and bathe the baby and hold the baby skin to skin.
- Connect with groups and people that help support families and breastfeeding (e.g., Healthy Baby Community Support programs, a breastfeeding support program, such as La Leche League). Ask your public health nurse (PHN) for groups in your area.



Alcohol, drugs, smoking and medications can affect your breastmilk. If you use any of these, it is still important to breastfeed your baby so talk to your health care provider about doing it safely.

It's normal to go through an adjustment period when you have a new baby – mothers experience many different emotions. Parents expect to feel happiness with the arrival of a new baby, but many mothers and fathers are surprised by other common feelings such as sadness, anger, fear or anxiety.

Up to 75% of mothers experience the “baby blues” after childbirth. They may feel weepy, overwhelmed, irritable, anxious, exhausted, and often have trouble sleeping. The baby blues are a common part of the adjustment period—often beginning a few days after birth and going away on their own in about two weeks.

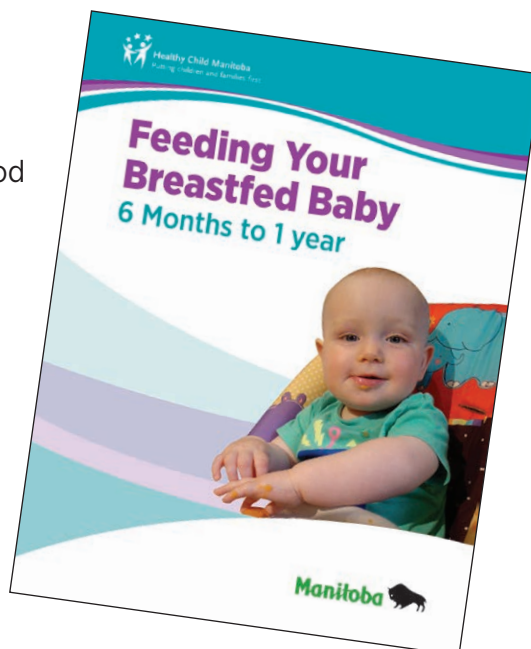
If these feelings don't go away, or get worse, you may be experiencing postpartum depression and it's important to call your health care provider to discuss how you are feeling. He or she can provide you with available resources for dealing with postpartum depression. It's critical you talk to someone about how you're feeling—without help, your condition could get worse.

**Note:** *Having breastfeeding difficulties can make you feel anxious and overwhelmed. In these situations, getting breastfeeding support can help.*

# When to Offer Solid Foods to Your Baby

Health Canada recommends that breastmilk is the only food your baby needs until he or she is 6 months old. Infants should start iron-rich foods at 6 months, with continued breastfeeding for 2 years or longer.

For more information on introducing solids, see the pamphlet: *Feeding Your Breastfed Baby 6 Months to 1 Year*.



**Did you know?** Mom's diet rarely affects her baby. If you have concerns about foods you are eating, ask your health care provider.

# Resources

If you have questions about breastfeeding, call your local public health nurse (PHN), or contact:

- **Breastfeeding Hotline:**  
Phone: 204-788-8667 (in Winnipeg);  
toll free 1-888-315-9257 (outside Winnipeg)  
Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- **Health Links-Info Santé:**  
Phone: 204-788-8209 (in Winnipeg);  
toll free 1-888-315-9257 (outside Winnipeg)  
Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- **Winnipeg La Leche League Phone Support and Groups:**  
Phone: 204-257-3509 (in Winnipeg)
- **Dial-a-Dietitian:**  
Phone: 204-788-8248 (in Winnipeg);  
toll free 1-877-830-2892  
Hours: Monday to Friday – 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.



## Web Resources

For online breastfeeding information, visit:

- Healthy Child Manitoba Office  
[www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/healthybaby/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/healthybaby/index.html)
- Caring for Kids  
[www.caringforkids.cps.ca](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca)
- Kelly Mom  
[www.kellymom.com](http://www.kellymom.com)
- La Leche League Canada  
[www.lllc.ca](http://www.lllc.ca)
- Mother Risk  
[www.motherisk.org](http://www.motherisk.org)
- Stanford Medicine: Getting Started With Breastfeeding:  
<https://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding.html>

# For more information

**For questions about feeding your baby healthy  
and nutritious foods:**

Dial-a-Dietitian

204-788-8248 (in Winnipeg)

1-877-830-2892 (toll free outside Winnipeg)

**For more resources on parenting:**

1-877-945-4777

[www.manitobaparentzone.ca](http://www.manitobaparentzone.ca)



Winnipeg Regional  
Health Authority  
Office régional de la  
santé de Winnipeg



**Dial-a-Dietitian**