



**Breastfeeding will benefit you as well as your baby. This fact sheet will give you tips for breastfeeding successfully and explains how to know if your is feeding well.**

## The beauty of breast milk

For baby, breastfeeding:

- provides nutrition for optimum growth and development
- provides protection against a range of infections, such as chest, middle ear or gastrointestinal infections
- reduces risk and severity of allergies e.g. asthma, eczema
- reduces the risk of diseases in adulthood such as Diabetes Types I and II and childhood cancers such as lymphoma.

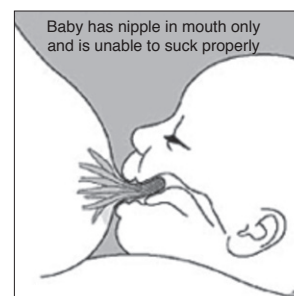
For mothers, breastfeeding may:

- assist your uterus to return to normal size after birth
- reduce the risk of premenopausal breast cancer
- delay ovulation if your baby is exclusively breastfed.

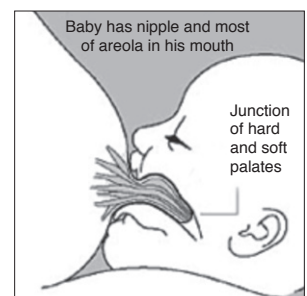
## How to breastfeed

When breastfeeding:

- make sure you are sitting comfortably and you are well supported
- hold your baby close to you, facing your chest
- position your baby on his side with his nose opposite your nipple
- support your breast from underneath
- position your fingers well back from the areola/nipple so your baby is able to take a big mouthful of breast tissue
- touch your baby's lips with your nipple to encourage your baby to open his mouth wide
- make sure your baby's mouth is very wide (like yawning), bring your baby quickly to the breast, chin first
- attach so your baby's bottom lip is well down over the areola, 'off centre'
- continue to support your breast until your baby is sucking and swallowing in a deep rhythmic pattern
- if you experience pain once your baby has commenced swallowing take your baby off and re-attach
- remember to insert a clean finger between the baby's gums to break the seal when taking your baby off the breast.



Poor attachment



Optimal attachment

## How often does baby need to feed?

Your baby needs a minimum of 8–10 feeds in 24 hours, especially in the early weeks after birth.

You know your baby is feeding well when:

- your baby is settled after most feeds
- your baby is alert, active and content when awake
- your baby has at least six soaked cloth nappies in 24 hours after your milk 'comes in'; disposable nappies should be heavy and spongy
- your baby has at least one yellow, loose bowel action every day after initial meconium (first bowel action) is passed.

Your baby should be back to birth weight by two weeks of age. Normal weight gain is between 20 and 30 grams per day, or between 150 and 210 grams per week.

### You know your baby is feeding correctly when:

- after some initial short frequent sucks to stimulate milk flow, your baby begins to swallow. Sucking becomes slower, deeper and more rhythmic with rest periods between each sucking burst. As the feed progresses the sucking bursts become shorter and the rest periods longer
- you can hear or see your baby swallowing.

### You may develop problems breastfeeding if you:

- restrict suckling time at the breast
- give infant formula to your baby without medical advice
- use dummies in the early weeks.

## For more information and advice

### Your local Maternal & Child Health Nurse

#### Maternal & Child Health Line (24 hours)

Tel: 13 22 29

#### Australian Breastfeeding Association

Tel: 1800 686 268 – Breastfeeding Helpline

Web: [www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au)

#### Breastfeeding NHS

Web: [www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk](http://www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk)

#### Related fact sheets

- Mastitis
- Using a breast pump

#### Related fact sheet

*Breastfeeding: Getting started*