

Getting off to a Healthy Start

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Give the Best

Nat'l Naval Medical Ctr
Lactation Support Team
8901 Wisconsin Ave
Bethesda, MD 20889

Need more help?

If you have additional questions about breast-feeding or the services offered through the Lactation Support Program, Please call our office weekdays between 0800-1400

Call: 301-319-5033 or 301-295-9959

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Getting Started

The first two weeks with your new baby are a special time to get to know each-other and learn how to nurse. Every mother and baby are different and you will learn new skills together as you practice with each nursing session. Here are a few tips for the first two weeks:

- Nurse the baby as soon as possible after birth and as often as baby is interested. Your baby may nurse very frequently during these first few days. Nursing early and often helps increase your milk supply and helps the baby regain weight.
- After you go home from the hospital, keep the baby awake and actively nursing when he is on the breast. You may need to wake a sleepy baby in the daytime to feed every two to three hours (8-12 feedings in a 24 hour day.) If baby is sleepy, you can switch breasts, pat or rub his back, move his arms and legs or wipe his face with a cool cloth to help keep him awake. You can also use gentle hand compression on your breast to stimulate the milk to let down.

Is baby getting enough milk?

- Listen for swallowing. An open-pause-close sucking pattern shows you that the baby is getting a mouthful of milk.
- Watch for bowel movements to change from sticky and dark on the first days of life to a lighter green by the fourth day of life. By the end of the first week, the baby's stools should be a mustard-yellow color.
- Check for urine (tear the liner of disposable diapers open if you can't tell) Baby should have 1-3 wet diapers on days 1-3. By day 4-6 baby should have 4-6 wet diapers. After day 6, you should see at least 6-8 wet diapers.

Call for advice if:

- Baby falls asleep on the breast without nursing and wakes up after being taken off.
- Baby hasn't had a bowel movement in 24 hours.

Call for help immediately if:

- Baby has only quick sucking or chewing on the nipple and no swallowing.
- Baby falls asleep without nursing and is difficult to wake up.
- Baby's bowel movements are still dark green after day 5.
- Baby still has less than 3 wet diapers after day 3.

When you are home, protect your privacy, limit visitors and nap when baby naps to save your energy. Call for help if you have sore nipples, engorgement or any other concerns. Overcoming common hurdles in the first two weeks can make a difference in getting breastfeeding off to a healthy start!!

Promote, Protect, Support Breastfeeding

