

Feeding your baby

The best start in life

It is recommended that where possible babies are exclusively fed breast milk for at least the first six months. Breast milk is the best nutrition for your baby and helps them to grow at the right rate and fight infections. Offer your baby lots of opportunities to feed in the early days. Babies have very small stomachs when they are born; they can hold just over a teaspoon full.

At birth, give your baby a long cuddle: Skin to skin contact for at least one hour calms both mum and baby, regulates baby's heart rate and temperature, and stimulates mothering hormones which helps to form a close bond and increase breast milk supply. Baby's immediate needs are to feel safe and secure, and to be able to feed whenever hungry. Holding your baby close to feed, and responding to all of baby's needs encourages healthy brain connections. Most of this development will occur within the first two years. Responsive parenting will enable your baby to reach its full potential, to help them form good relationships and communicate well, giving them the best start in life.

Breastfeeding can be challenging and this is when dads and partners support and encouragement can really help. Dads and partners can help in other ways such as nappy changing, offering reassurance and helping with meals.

If you are struggling and finding breastfeeding difficult, don't feel alone, seek some help. Talk to your health visitor or breastfeeding peer supporter.

Sterilising and bottle hygiene

- The cleaning and sterilising instructions are the same, whether you are using expressed breast milk or infant formula milk.
- All the equipment you use for bottle feeding your baby needs to be washed in hot soapy water, rinsed and sterilised. Wash your hands.
- You need to keep sterilising your baby's feeding equipment including bottles and teats until your baby is at least 12 months old.
- Infections (like gastroenteritis) are rare, but if they do occur, can be very serious.
- Follow the instructions on the packet/tin. Do not put in extra scoops of formula.
- Use cooled boiled tap water (mains) to make up feeds. Bottled mineral water is not suitable.
- Bacteria that can make your baby ill may be present in small numbers in powder feed. Bacteria can multiply very quickly when they are in an environment that is warm, wet and full of nutrients, just like milk in a feed bottle. By making up feeds as they are needed rather than in batches you reduce the risk of bacteria multiplying in the feed.
- Formula Preparation Machines are not recommended as all the water is not heated to the recommended boiling temperature. This may lead to an increased risk of gastroenteritis.

www.nhs.uk/Conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/sterilising-bottles.aspx

Feeding tips

- How to tell your baby is having enough milk:
- Baby is content and settled during and after each feed.
- During a feed, you can hear baby swallowing.
- Weight gain - checked by your health visitor.
- Dirty nappies, two to three soft stools daily until four to six weeks, after which one a day, although it can be less frequent.
- Wet heavy nappies - around six in 24 hours from day five.
- Remember, breast milk fulfils all of your baby's needs for around six months although you can continue breastfeeding for longer. It also reduces the incidence of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Ordinary supermarket cow's milk should not be offered until your baby reaches one year, although it is suitable to use from six months in breakfast cereals.

Breastfeeding is a new skill for both you and your baby to learn. Be patient and kind to yourself, it will take time for you both to adjust and learn the skill together.

1. Hold your baby's whole body close with their nose level with your nipple to help them attach correctly.
2. Let your baby's head tip back a little so that their top lip can brush against your nipple. This should help your baby to make a wide open mouth.
3. When your baby's mouth opens wide, **their chin is able to touch your breast first**, with their head tilted, so that their lower lip can make contact with the breast 2-3cm below the nipple.
4. With their chin firmly touching and their nose clear, their mouth is wide open and there will be much more of the darker skin visible above your baby's top lip than below their bottom lip. Your baby's cheeks will look full and rounded as they feed.

There are lots of different positions for breastfeeding. You just need to check the following:

- **Are your baby's head and body in a straight line?** If not, your baby might not be able to swallow easily.
- **Are you holding your baby close to you?** Support their neck, shoulders and back. They should be able to tilt their head back easily.

Source: DoH, www.lullabytrust.org.uk

Tongue-tie can sometimes affect feeding, making it hard to attach properly to the breast. Speak to your health visitor.

Baby Café

The Baby Café in Calderdale offers breastfeeding drop-in support. They offer help and support to breastfeeding mothers at any stage in their breastfeeding journey, regardless of the age of the baby or child, no matter how much breast milk you are giving. Pregnant women are welcome too, to go along and find out about breastfeeding.

www.thebabycafe.org/?option=com_babycafe&task=view&ID=4

1

There is breastfeeding group support and one to one support available from trained peer supporters, mums just like you, who have breastfed their babies. They can offer practical solutions and advice over the phone, through home visits or at locations across Calderdale. Contact Calderdale Breastfeeding Peer Support 07920 466660 or find them on Facebook.

2

Have you been shown how to hand express? It's a useful skill and free! Visit your local breastfeeding support group, speak to a peer supporter, your midwife or your health visitor.

3

There may be times when breastfeeding becomes a problem or it may feel painful from sore, cracked or bleeding nipples - seek help from your midwife, health visitor or GP. Get advice on positioning your baby.

If your baby has oral thrush, it's possible for your baby to pass a thrush infection to you. The infection can affect your nipples or breasts.

For more information on the benefits of breastfeeding and advice on when and how to wean off breastfeeding please visit the links below:

www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/emotional-experience-breastfeeding

www.nhs.uk/Conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/Pages/stopping-breastfeeding.aspx