

Breastfeeding in the early days and weeks

Keep your baby close to you so you can recognise the signals that tell you she is hungry, thirsty or would just like a cuddle. Responding to these signals before your baby gets upset will help her feel safe and secure. You can offer your baby a feed if your breasts are full, if you need to fit in a feed around other commitments, or anytime you want to sit down and spend time with your baby. This is known as responsive breastfeeding. It will ensure that you make enough milk for your growing baby. You can't overfeed a breastfed baby and so feeding whenever either of you want, will help make life easier and ensure that you make enough milk for your growing baby.

- Night feeds are important to help maintain a good milk supply, as your milk making hormones are higher at night. See you leaflet 'Caring for your baby at night' (unicef.org.uk/caringatnight) for some helpful information.
- Try to avoid using teats and dummies when baby is learning to breastfeed as the it may be confusing
- Breastfeeding works on a supply and demand basis: the more milk your baby takes, the more you will make
- Giving your baby breastmilk and nothing else, will provide her with maximum protection from infections, allergies and ensure that all her nutritional needs are met.
- If you do decide to introduce formula you can carry on giving some breastmilk as well. The more breastmilk you give the better the nutrition and protection will be for your baby.
- To get things off to a great start, offer feeds when baby shows early signals of being hungry, tired, or just needs some time with you.
- If baby is upset, try to soothe him before you offer a feed. Skin contact is great for calming babies at any time.
- You can talk to The National Breastfeeding Helpline on 0300 100 0212, for confidential advice and support.

