



# Nourishing the

## Newborn: Birth to Four Months

**W**hat and how you feed your baby is important — especially during the first year when he grows so fast. The average baby doubles his birth weight by five months of age and triples his weight by his first birthday. A smaller than average baby often grows even more rapidly. Breast milk or iron-fortified formula is baby's most important food in the first year, and should be his only food the first four to six months.

### Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is recognized as the best choice for most infants by all health professionals.

### Advantages to the Baby

- ☛ fewer allergies;
- ☛ fewer gastrointestinal tract diseases;
- ☛ fewer respiratory tract diseases;
- ☛ less inflammation of the ear;
- ☛ lower chance of obesity in childhood; and
- ☛ creates a special bond between baby and mother.

### Advantages to the Mother

- ☛ helps reduce the size of her uterus;
- ☛ expends extra calories and, therefore, may help her reduce weight faster;
- ☛ may lessen the risk of breast cancer;
- ☛ time-saving;
- ☛ delays return of ovulation, but is not a reliable form of birth control;
- ☛ messy diapers have a very mild odor; and
- ☛ creates a special bond between mother and baby.

### Learning to Breastfeed

- ☛ Colostrum is the first fluid secreted from the breasts. This yellow, sticky fluid helps protect your baby from infection.
- ☛ A few days after a mother gives birth, her milk comes in. Breasts may become uncomfortable and engorged until the baby's needs and nursing pattern are established.

- ☛ At first, a baby should nurse eight to 15 times a day. By about four weeks, this will have gradually reduced to five to eight times a day and the baby will probably have established a fairly regular nursing pattern.
- ☛ A new mother should nurse for three to five minutes on each breast. This time should slowly be increased so that when the baby is a week or two old he is nursing about 15 minutes on each breast.

The amount of protein and fat in breast milk varies during nursing, therefore, it is important to nurse at least 15 minutes on each breast every time you nurse. If your baby falls asleep before he has nursed long enough, try waking him by rubbing the bottoms of his feet.

- ☛ When nursing, hold your baby comfortably. Be sure your arm and back are well supported.
- ☛ When the side of a baby's mouth is touched, he will turn his head in that direction. This is called rooting. Use this technique to help your baby latch on to the breast.
- ☛ Make sure that as much nipple and areola (brown area around the nipple) is in the baby's mouth as possible.
- ☛ The tingling feeling you may get about a minute after you start nursing is called the let-down reflex. Regardless of whether you feel it, this is when your milk starts to flow.
- ☛ Successful nursing depends on a relaxed and supportive atmosphere. Your baby will be restful, happy and sleeping well when he has had enough milk.

- ☛ Break the baby's suction before removing the nipple from your baby's mouth. This is done by slipping your finger into the side of his mouth. Slowly press so that an opening occurs between his mouth and the nipple. Remove the nipple from the baby's mouth.
- ☛ After nursing, the baby should be burped by rubbing or patting his back. Some milk may be burped up, but this is normal.
- ☛ The messy diapers of a breastfed baby are soft or very loose, yellow or beige in color, and have a more pleasant odor than those of a bottle-fed baby.
- ☛ Your breastfed baby may need to be given iron, vitamin D or fluoride supplements. Ask your nutritionist, nurse or doctor.

## **Breastfeeding:**

### **Nutrient Needs of the Mother**

A woman who is breastfeeding needs the same nutrients as a pregnant woman, plus additional calories and calcium. The additional needs can be satisfied by eating an extra serving from the Milk and Cheese Group and extra servings from the other food groups as needed. A breastfeeding teen needs about 200 more calories per day than a pregnant teen.

Good snack and dessert choices to provide extra calories include nutrient-dense foods such as pumpkin or sweet potato pie, banana bread, peanut butter cookies, vegetable soup, or a piece of pizza.

Adequate intake of liquids is also important — a breastfeeding mother should consume eight to 12 cups or four to six large glasses per day. Good choices include water, milk or 100 percent fruit juice.

Certain foods (usually gaseous or strong-flavored ones) eaten by the mother may affect the flavor of the milk or cause gastrointestinal problems in the baby. Not all babies are affected by the same foods. If a particular food seems to cause a problem, eliminate that food for a few days to see if the problem disappears.

## **Formula Feeding**

- ☛ If you choose to bottle feed your baby, use an iron-fortified baby formula. Your baby will not need additional vitamins.
- ☛ Follow your health care provider's instructions for preparing formula and sterilizing bottles, nipples, cap and other formula preparation equipment. Contact your health department to check if your well or cistern water is safe to give to your baby.
- ☛ Make only enough formula to last one day. Store mixed formula in the refrigerator in separate bottles for each feeding or clean, sterilized jar with a tight lid. Use within one day. Store unmixed, opened liquid formula in the refrigerator no longer than 48 hours.
- ☛ Check the bottle nipples regularly. The hole should be large enough so that formula flows easily, but not so large that your baby chokes. Discard any nipples that are sticky.
- ☛ Warm the formula in the bottle in a small pan of water on the stove. Do not boil. If using plastic bottles, be careful not to melt the bottom of the bottle. Shake a few drops of the warmed milk onto your wrist to check its temperature before offering the bottle to your baby. It should feel warm, not hot. Never warm the bottle in the microwave.
- ☛ When feeding your baby, tilt the bottle so the nipple is completely filled with formula. Hold but don't rock your baby. This helps prevent extra air from getting into the baby's tummy. Do not put the baby to bed with a bottle or prop the bottle on a pillow or blanket or toy.
- ☛ Throw away any formula left in the bottle after each feeding.
- ☛ Burp your baby once or twice during each feeding by rubbing or patting his back gently. Your baby may burp up some of his feeding. This is normal.