



Breastfeeding ... your adopted baby

Will I be able to breastfeed my baby?

It is possible to feed an adopted baby at your breast. This is called **induced lactation**. Some mothers are able to make enough milk for their babies. Some will need to give their babies formula as well as their breastmilk. A few mothers will make very little breastmilk and will need to feed mostly formula. Even though you may not be able to feed your baby with your breastmilk alone, you and your baby will still get the benefits of feeding at your breast.

As soon as you know that you will be adding a new member to your family you can start to build a supply of breastmilk. Building up a milk supply when you have not been pregnant takes time and can be challenging. You will need to learn how breastmilk is made and what it will take to build up your milk supply. A lactation consultant can help you.

Think about these questions and then talk with the lactation consultant:

- What are my goals for breastfeeding?
- Can I do this in my situation?
- Do I have enough support to do this?

How do I get started?

Four to six weeks before your baby arrives, you will need to start pumping your breasts. Rent or buy a hospital-grade electric breast pump with a double kit so that you can pump both breasts at the same time. Pump your breasts at least 8 to 10 times a day, for 15 to 20 minutes each time.

After your baby arrives, you need to know how to put your baby on the breast correctly. This is called the 'latch'. If you need more information or help, ask a lactation consultant or public health nurse.

Offer your baby the breast at least every 2 to 3 hours. Your baby may take the breast quite easily. Make sure that your baby latches on to the breast correctly. Ask for help early if you are not sure that your baby has a good latch.

If your baby is not yet ready to take the breast, you will need to use a good quality breast pump. Emptying your breasts with a pump will help your body make milk.

The more milk you feed or pump, the more milk your body will make. This is called supply and demand.

Does my baby need formula as well as breastmilk?

Until your milk supply increases, you will likely need to give your baby extra formula. Some mothers are not able to make all the milk that baby needs. They continue to give their babies formula as long as they are breastfeeding.

The lactation consultant can help you learn the best way to give your baby formula. You may learn to use a tube at the breast or feed from a cup.

Try not to use bottles or soothers, also called pacifiers, during the time that your baby is learning to breastfeed as this may make it more difficult for your baby to latch to your breast.

What can I do to make breastfeeding as successful as possible?

Find people who will give you support. You may get help and support from a partner, friend or family member. You can also talk with a lactation consultant, the public health nurse, a La Leche League leader or your doctor.

Try to clear your schedule and get as much help at home as possible. Building a milk supply will take a lot of your time. Getting breastfeeding started may take 4 to 6 weeks.

It helps to have as much contact with your baby as possible. Spend a lot of time snuggling skin-to-skin with your baby.

Try to relax and enjoy your baby. Find a few minutes a day to do something that is soothing and relaxing. Some ideas are:

- talking with your partner or a friend
- reading or watching TV
- taking a long shower
- going for a walk
- writing down your thoughts in a journal

You may need to take a herb or a medication to help your body make milk. Talk to your doctor, lactation consultant or pharmacist about your options.

Some herbs, birth control methods and other medications can stop or slow down milk production. Discuss this with your lactation consultant, doctor or pharmacist.

Give yourself some time. You and your baby are learning something new. This takes time, practice, patience and support from others. Soon you will find that you feel more confident about breastfeeding.

How do I know my baby is getting enough milk?

Check your baby's wet and dirty diapers.

Babies more than 5 days old should have 6 to 8 heavy, wet diapers and at least 3 yellow, seedy bowel movements (stools) each day.

Have your baby's weight checked regularly.

Your baby's weight should be checked every week, and more often if your doctor or lactation consultant feel it is necessary.

Remember these 3 things that make breastfeeding successful:

- **A good latch.**
Your baby latches correctly on the breast.
- **Supply and demand.**
You are breastfeeding or pumping often.
- **Confidence and support.**
With help from others you will start to feel sure that you can breastfeed your baby.

There are many people who can answer questions and help you build up your milk supply.



Some choices are:

- ☎ a lactation consultant
- ☎ a public health nurse
- ☎ a La Leche League leader
- ☎ your doctor or midwife