

Breastfeeding is going well when

How to know that your baby is getting enough milk



Information for patients

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals





Breastfeeding is going well when

Your baby has breastfed at least 8 times in the last 24 hours.
Your baby breastfeeds for between 5 and 40 minutes at most feeds.
Your baby has normal skin colour (or if your baby has been jaundiced*, this is getting better).
Your baby is usually calm and relaxed whilst feeding, and is content after most feeds.
Your baby has plenty of wet and dirty nappies (see chart below).
Breastfeeding is comfortable for you. <i>(Some mothers feel some discomfort with the first few sucks, but this should not continue throughout the feed.)</i>
After the first 3 or 4 days (when your milk has come in) you should be able to hear your baby swallowing milk frequently during a feed. suck / suck / swallow, suck / suck / swallow
You and your baby are happy breastfeeding

Baby's age	** Wet nappies	Dirty nappies
Day 1 and 2	1 - 2 wet nappies *** pink / orange staining may be seen	Black sticky "tar-like" poo (meconium)
Day 3 and 4	3 or more wet nappies	Lighter, runnier poo which is changing colour to green / brown / yellow (changing stool)
Day 5 onwards (for the first few weeks)	At least 6 wet nappies in 24 hours	Bright yellow runny poo - at least 2 a day, and at least as big as a £2 coin



Not sure? Talk to your midwife if

Your baby seems sleepy, and has had fewer than 8 feeds in the last 24 hours.

Your baby often feeds for less than 5 minutes, or longer than 40 minutes. Your baby often falls asleep whilst feeding.

Your baby looks jaundiced* (yellow skin colour)

Your baby has difficulty latching at the breast, or comes on and off during feeds. Your baby is unsettled after most feeds.

Your baby does not have wet and dirty nappies as shown on the chart.

Your breast or nipples feel sore, during or after feeds.

After the first 3 or 4 days you don't hear your baby swallowing any milk, or this is infrequent.

(suck/suck/suck/suck/suck/suck/suck/suck swallow)

You are considering using a dummy, or some formula milk as well as breastfeeding.

Look in your "Mothers (and others) Guide" for more information.

* Most jaundice in babies is not harmful, but a few may need treatment, so it's important to report any signs of jaundice to your midwife.

** If you are using modern disposable nappies it can be hard to tell when they are wet as they are very absorbent. Try pouring 2-4 tablespoons full of water onto a clean nappy and feel the difference in the weight. This gives you an idea of what to look for.

*** You will often see pink / orange stain (called "urates") in your baby's wet nappies in the first 48 hours. If you continue to see them after 48 hours please speak to your midwife; it may be a sign that your baby isn't feeding well.

Responsive feeding is

- Breastfeeding your baby whenever he / she wants to feed (shows feeding clues).
- Breastfeeding whenever your breasts feel full.
- Breastfeeding whenever your baby needs comforting.
- Breastfeeding whenever you and your baby want to rest and relax.

What babies need

- Babies feel secure and loved when they are close to their parents, this helps to make them calm and happy.
- Babies who feel secure produce a hormone called oxytocin, which helps their brains to grow and develop. Smiling and talking to your baby also encourages this.
- When you hold your baby close, you too produce oxytocin, which makes you feel calm and relaxed.
- You cannot "spoil" a baby by responding to his / her needs. Young babies cannot learn a routine.
- Breastfed babies cannot be overfed and it is always appropriate to offer the breast, for closeness, comfort or food.

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