Nutrition
for your
newborn
A guide to feeding your newborn baby
feeding your newborn

It's not so long ago since I became a mum for the first time. I remember all the questions I had when I was trying to decide how to feed my baby and then, after my baby arrived, all the questions about the ins and outs of feeding my newborn baby. There's no doubt that feeding can be one of the most satisfying and intimate aspects of being a new mum but it's also the aspect that can cause the most worry to new mums and dads if things don't go smoothly as expected.

That's why the SMA Careline* has developed this booklet all about feeding your newborn baby - Nutrition for your newborn. It's packed full of everything you need to know about feeding your new baby, whether you're breast feeding or bottle feeding.

If you've any more questions about feeding or caring for your newborn baby, the SMA Careline will be able to provide you with lots of advice and information and will be able to answer all your questions about feeding and caring for your baby right up until he becomes a toddler. What's more, the specially trained advisors are all mums - so not only do they know the facts about babies, they know the realities too!

Happy reading - and successful feeding!

Kirstie Allsopp

*Throughout this booklet, we often mention healthcare professionals. This term refers to GPs, pharmacists, midwives, health visitors and public health nurses.

In this booklet, he or she is used to refer to both males and females babies.
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Breast is best

Give your newborn baby the best possible start in life by breast feeding.

- Breast milk is made up of the exact mix of proteins and nutrients your baby needs - a tailor-made blend which changes as your baby’s needs change.
- Breast milk provides your baby with added protection against infection.
- Breast milk reduces the risk of asthma, eczema and other allergies.
- Breast milk is easy for your baby to digest.
- Breast milk is available on demand and is always at exactly the right temperature.

It’s not just babies who benefit from breast feeding, so do mums.

- Breast feeding provides a unique bond between you and your baby at a very special time.
- Breast feeding reduces the risk of pre-menopausal breast cancer.
- Breast feeding helps the womb shrink back to its previous size and burns up extra calories, helping your figure return to its pre-pregnancy shape.
- By breast feeding your baby, there’s a constant supply of breast milk ready and waiting for your baby, wherever and whenever hunger strikes.
- With breast feeding, there’s no need to worry about sterilising bottles (unless you are expressing milk) or making up feeds.

For more advice on breast feeding your baby, speak to your healthcare professional or call the SMA Careline on 0845 776 2900 (UK) or 1800 931 832 (ROI) or visit www.smanutrition.co.uk or www.smanutrition.ie

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The early days

Your breasts automatically start producing milk immediately after your baby’s birth. As a result, when your baby first latches onto your breast, he’ll get his first drink - a very special drink, too.

Your breasts will produce colostrum and it’s a dark, yellow, creamy, easily digestible combination of all the antibodies and nutrients your baby requires for the first few days. Don’t worry if your baby only has a little at a time as colostrum packs a lot of goodness into a small quantity. As long as you feed your baby when he’s hungry [on demand], your baby will get all the nourishment he needs.

The next few days

After 3 or 4 days, your breasts will become fuller and start producing breast milk that is thinner and more milky coloured than colostrum - and lots of it! From now on, your baby’s feed will consist of 2 different milks. First, ‘foremilk’, which satisfies your baby’s thirst, and then ‘hindmilk’, which contains more proteins and fat to satisfy his hunger.

It’s important to let your baby feed for as long as he wants to so he gets enough milk to satisfy both his hunger and his thirst. The more milk your baby drinks, the more milk your breasts will produce, so don’t worry about running out.
“Does breast feeding hurt?”

The sensations experienced during breast feeding, especially in the early days, vary from mum to mum. Some women experience a tingling sensation, some don’t feel much at all, some find it painful when the milk first comes into the nipple from the breast, while others are amazed by how easy it is. The only way to find out how your body will react to breast feeding is to try it.

If you experience pain while breast feeding, or your nipples become sore or cracked, mention this to your midwife who will check your baby is in the right position and that he’s latching on properly.

Tender breasts?

3 or 4 days after the birth, most new mums find their breasts become tender. This is perfectly natural and will decrease as your body adjusts to producing the right amount of milk for your baby.

If you are breast feeding, feeding your baby regularly will help to relieve this. If you are not breast feeding, the tenderness will usually last for a few days, before gradually easing as your milk dries up. Wearing a good supportive bra can also help, but if you are at all concerned speak to your healthcare professional.

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How to breast feed your newborn baby

- Relax and make yourself and your baby comfortable; a drink nearby is useful as you may become thirsty. Use cushions to support your back and, if required, a pillow on your lap to support your baby.

- Position your baby up to your breast so his nose is in line with your nipple.

- Bring your baby forward and gently move his top lip across the nipple - your baby should instinctively open his mouth wide enough to cover the nipple and the dark area surrounding it [areola].

- Move your baby forwards so his mouth latches onto the nipple, making sure his bottom lip and chin touch the breast first.

- Let your baby feed for as long as he wants to - if one breast runs out of milk, swap to the other one.

- After your baby has finished feeding, 'wind' or 'bump' your baby by gently rubbing his back to get rid of any pockets of air in his tummy, as this can be uncomfortable for him. There are 2 positions commonly used for winding or burping a baby: over your shoulder or with him sitting up on your lap, making sure he's well supported.

Choose whichever position is comfortable for you and then rub your baby's back gently. Take your time - it might take a little while for all that wind to come up. If nothing happens, resume the feed.

And remember that your baby might bring up some milk, so always have a cloth handy to protect your clothes.

If you're not sure if your baby is in the correct position or is feeding properly, or if you have any other questions about breast feeding, ask your midwife. Midwives are there to help and advise you in the days after the birth (as well as before), and will provide you with all the support you need as you and your baby get to grips with breast feeding.
Breast feeding tips

- If you're not sure if your baby is feeding, pay attention to his ears - when your baby is feeding successfully, his ears will move slightly as his jaw moves.
- Some babies latch on immediately while others take slightly longer - persevere if you can.
- Use alternate breasts for each feed (tie a ribbon to the relevant bra strap to remind you which breast to feed from at the next feed).
- If your baby feeds from both breasts during the same feed, start with the breast you finished with for the next feed.
- To release your baby from your nipple, carefully slide a finger into your baby's mouth and gently break the suction.
- Remember - practice makes perfect!

“How often should I breast feed my baby?”

Babies will feed when they want to and for as long as they want to. During the first few days most babies feed very frequently (sometimes every 1.5 - 3 hours) and will feed for as long as they need to.

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