

# Does my breastfed baby need some formula milk?

Maternity Service

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Information for Patients

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## Introduction

Are you thinking of giving your breastfed baby a formula feed? This information may help you decide what is best for you and your baby. **You can also talk to your midwife.**

## How often will my baby feed?

It is normal for your baby to feed 3 or 4 times in the first 24 hours. After that, your baby needs to feed more. **At least 8 feeds in 24 hours.** They often feed a lot at night too. This is important as your baby is helping to make the milk they will need. It will help to make sure you have a good milk supply.

## How do I know my baby is getting enough breast milk?

- Your baby will wake for feeds.
- Your baby will feed 8 to 12 times in 24 hours. This may include 'cluster feeds' at night. A cluster feed is when your baby has a lot of short feeds close together over a few hours.
- Your baby will be passing pee (urine), 6 heavy wet nappies by day 6.
- Your baby will be passing poo. The poo will change to yellow poo by day 4. Your baby should have at least 2 poo's in each 24 hrs. If your baby is less than 4 weeks old and not passing any poo this may be a sign they are not getting enough milk.
- Your baby feeds between 5 to 40minutes at each feed. Your baby takes both breasts at each feed.
- Your breasts feel full at the beginning of a feed and less full at the end of the feed.
- Breast feeding is comfortable.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.uhleicester.nhs.uk](http://www.uhleicester.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net)

- If you have answered 'no' to any of the points then please ask for help. If you are in hospital ask the staff. If you are at home please ring the community office. You can also ring the National Breastfeeding Helpline (see page 4).
- You can try some of the suggestions below.

## What is colostrum?

Colostrum is naturally produced in your breast. It is made in small amounts. Your baby's body is not ready to cope with a large amount of milk in the first few days after birth. Colostrum is good for your baby as it:

- Kick starts your baby's immune system. This helps to protect them from infection.
- Works as a softener of poo. This gently helps push out the black sticky poo that they are born with.
- Helps the gut to be healthy
- Has other long-term health benefits for your baby.

## Is there anything I can do to settle my baby or help my baby to feed?

- Ask for help with positioning and attaching your baby. This will help your baby to feed
- Skin-to-skin contact is a great way to settle babies. They cry less when in skin contact. They can find the breast to feed too
- Have you been shown how to hand express? If you express, you can give your milk to your baby instead of formula
- Remember the first milk "colostrum" is the perfect food for your baby
- Wake your baby if they have slept for more than 3 hours. Respond to feeding cues and feed your baby before they cry.

## Why does it matter if I give some formula to my breastfed baby?

- If your baby feeds less often at the breast you will make less milk. You will make more milk if you baby feeds often and feeds well.
- Babies that have large amounts of formula milk may be less satisfied with breast feeds.
- Your baby's gut has healthy bacteria (microbiome). This bacteria plays a key role in your baby's life-long health and wellbeing.
- Breast milk promotes a healthy microbiome. This helps the development of your baby's immune system. Your baby's immune system protects against harmful bacteria
- Healthy bacteria form up to 75% total gut bacteria when breast milk is given
- Mixing formula milk feeds with breast feeds changes your baby's gut microbiome.

- If there is a history of diabetes, asthma, eczema or allergy in the family, giving formula milk may increase the chance of baby developing allergies.

## When might I need to give my breastfed baby some formula?

There may be many reasons for this. The most common medical reasons are because:

- Your baby's blood sugar is low.
- Your baby has lost more weight than is expected.
- Your baby is dehydrated.

Your doctor, midwife or nurse will talk to you before they recommend giving your baby formula. They will support you to express your own milk. They will also help you maintain your milk supply. This will help you and your baby to return to fully breastfeeding when your baby is well.

If a formula feed is recommended, every effort will be made to continue to protect breastfeeding and your milk supply. Ask for help with breastfeeding, help with regular expressing, and help with skin-to-skin contact.

**Your expressed breast milk can be given before a formula feed.** How the feed is given will depend on each baby.

Supplements can be given by:

- A small tube through your baby's nose into their tummy (nasogastric tube)
- A cup
- A bottle
- Expressed breast milk or colostrum, if less than 5mls, can be given by an oral syringe into their mouth, between the tongue and the cheek.

The aim is to help you get back to full breastfeeding as soon as possible, while making sure your baby is feeding and well.



## Contact details

Please talk to your midwife about any concerns you have about feeding your baby. When you are at home you will have phone numbers on your discharge paperwork. In hospital please speak to the ward staff.

Maternity Services: **0116 258 6111**

National Breast Feeding Helpline: **0300 100 0212**

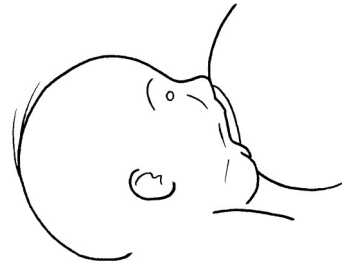
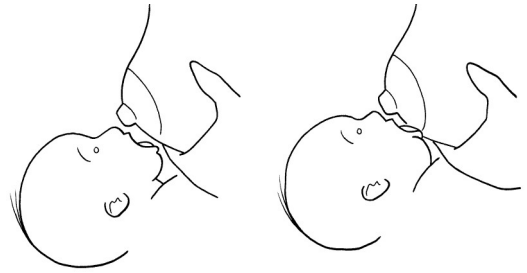
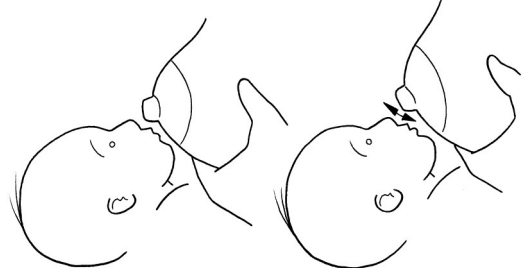
Community Office: **0116 258 4834**

### Tip:

Aim your nipple at baby's nose. Tickle their top lip with your nipple. Wait for a wide open mouth and bring your baby in close with their chin touching the breast first.

### CHIN:

- Close
- Head free
- In line
- Nose to nipple



اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।  
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net)