



Saint Francis Hospital
Trinity Health

Breastfeeding During the First Week

First breastfeeding should be encouraged soon after birth when the baby is usually in a wakeful state. The baby may nuzzle, snuggle, lick or may latch and suckle. Some babies cry. Remember, this is the first of many early times you and the baby will use to get to know each other. Colostrum, the first milk, is present in your breasts for your baby.

Offer the baby the breast, watching for the **baby hunger cue signs that are listed below.**

General Guidelines

- Keep the baby nearby and put the baby to breast frequently
- It's never too early to offer the breast
- Baby may be sleepy at one session and more wakeful within a short time
- It may take a number of minutes before the baby latches on
- Let baby come off the first breast before offering the second side
- Nursing is comfortable when baby is latched correctly
- Feedings are frequent in the first weeks. Watch baby, not the clock
- Avoid the use of nipples, pacifiers, and supplemental feedings (unless medically indicated)

Baby Readiness Cues

- Baby is rooting and starting to bring fist to mouth
- He or she is in a light sleep or quiet awake state
- Newborns keep their eyes closed most of the time
- The deep sleep state is more difficult to rouse the baby to feed
- Soothe the baby a few minutes if crying. It is best to feed baby before he or she is in this state of arousal

Breastfeeding Checklist

Baby should continue to have at least one more wet diaper per day until reaches one week of age and then will have at least 6-8 wet diapers in 24 hours. Bowel movements should be yellow and at least 4 in 24 hours in the early weeks after birth.

If you can answer **yes** to each of these questions when your baby is one week old then you know breastfeeding is going well. If you answer **no** to any of these questions, call your baby's health care provider or a breastfeeding support group. Getting help early is best for enjoyable breastfeeding.

Is Breastfeeding Going Well?

- Baby latches, suckles and swallows during feeding?
- Feeds 8 to 12 times a day during the first week? Baby offered breast frequently, according to the baby's readiness cues?
- Baby ends feeding by coming off breast before offered second side?
- Mother and baby are comfortable during feedings?
- Baby is satisfied between feedings and baby is gaining weight?
- Does your baby have at least 4 large bowel movements each day?
- Is your baby getting only breastmilk (no formula or water)?
- Is your baby happy or sleepy after breastfeeding?
- Not in need of a pacifier?