

Nursing, In a Nutshell

1. The more often you nurse, the more milk you will have. The more milk your baby takes from you, the more milk your body will make. It's a very simple system!

2. Enough milk? Most women are capable of nursing twins! Six to eight heavy/wet diapers a day usually mean there's plenty of milk "going in". And your milk is the *normal* food for your baby, always changing to meet his changing needs.

3. Some babies are sleepy at first and need encouragement to nurse frequently, but many newborns like to nurse *a lot*. Many newborns like a long nursing every hour or so through much of the day (especially in the evening!). But as they grow, their "nursing marathon" tapers off. Really!

4. Nursing provides warmth, security, body contact, reassurance, and relaxation, as well as just food. Don't try to put your baby's favorite activity on a schedule. Forget the clock and enjoy each other, the way nursing was meant to be.

5. Big or small, fat or thin, most healthy babies do best with only mother's milk for the first half year or so. Even water is unnecessary. And don't worry about overfeeding. There is no evidence that breastfed babies gain any more than their "programmed" amount, however often they nurse. You *cannot* nurse a growing baby too often; you *can* nurse too little.

6. Sometimes sore nipples are a concern. They are most often helped just by improving your nursing position. Hug your baby tummy to tummy with you, on his side, his back and neck in a straight line. Hold him so that his *nose*, not his chin, is near your nipple, and snuggle his belly and knees against your body. Support your breast with your fingers *well back*. When he opens wide, roll or stroke your breast onto

his tongue, so that your nipple goes in last and his lower lip is as far as possible from your nipple. Pull him in so that his cheeks touch your breast. If you feel you need help, call La Leche League or a board certified lactation consultant. Breastfeeding is a learned skill, and it makes sense to learn from successful nursing mothers.

7. Returning to work? You can still nurse your baby! It is the only thing you can do for your baby that no one else can. Check with a La Leche League Leader or certified lactation consultant on how to manage the details. Even if you nurse for only a few weeks, you'll give your baby an irreplaceable start.

8. Do your breasts feel "empty"? Don't be fooled! As long as you are a nursing mother, they will never be empty. And waiting for your breasts to "fill up" before feeding your little one will actually *reduce* your milk supply. After a month or so, your production will match your nursing's demand and you won't feel full. But the milk will still be there, as long as you've been nursing whenever your baby is interested.

9. You and your baby are unique. Listen, learn, and sift out the ideas that feel best for *the two of you*. Your nursing relationship will not be exactly like any other.

10. It's worth repeating: Nursing frequently is the best way to ensure a good milk supply and a healthy and happy baby. It's a system as old as humankind, and it works just fine.

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