

Advice from Experts in the Early Weeks at Home with Baby



Everyone's start to their baby feeding journey varies. Some people need to start pumping immediately based on a variety of reasons, but some do not. In the first few weeks after your baby is born focus on getting to know each other, establishing feeding on demand, and resting. Take any offers of help available to you!

- **Your milk supply is established in the first 4-6 weeks.** The more milk you remove by nursing or pumping, the more your body will make long term. If your breast is not noticeably softer after your baby feeds, your baby is not gaining weight, or feedings are painful, consider reaching out to a lactation specialist for a feeding evaluation.
- **Newborns typically nurse between 8-12 times in 24 hours.** A newborn feeding may last between 15 and 45 minutes. As your baby gets older and more efficient they nurse less often and for a shorter amount of time. By 6 weeks your baby may feed 6-8 times in 24 hours. Every baby is different!
- **Paying attention to hunger cues sets your baby up for a healthy relationship with food for life.** Watch your baby for [signs of hunger and fullness](#). Focus on being loving during feeding time.
- **When you are ready, begin practicing with your pump.** Most lactating parents make more milk in the morning and less in the evening. Try pumping within an hour after one of your morning feeds.
- **Gently massage your breast to stimulate letdown before you start pumping.** Pump for 10-20 minutes. It takes time to get used to pumping and how much your body makes!
- **Try introducing a bottle to your baby around 4 weeks old if they haven't already been bottle fed.** If someone else is bottle feeding your baby, use that time to pump.
- **If your baby wants to nurse after you have pumped, then go ahead and nurse.** Your body always has more milk and makes milk the fastest right after you feed or pump.
- **It can be helpful to have enough pumped milk for 2-5 days.** You will pump while at work and that milk will be used the next day.
- **Take advantage of local baby support groups that are often facilitated by a lactation specialist.** These groups provide support, the opportunity to ask questions, and guidance from an expert.