

# Exclusive Breastfeeding the First Six Months and Feeding on Cue

Most babies need only breastmilk for six months. No other food or liquid.

## Breastmilk:

- Provides all the nutrition baby needs.
- Protects your baby against diarrhea, pneumonia, ear infection, bladder infection, diabetes, obesity, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and autism. \*

## Formula:

- Doesn't have disease-fighting properties.
- Takes longer to digest.
- Makes baby feed less at the breast, which decreases your milk production.

## Colostrum:

- Is your first milk. It helps protect your baby against disease.
- Small amounts just fit baby's stomach.
- As your baby's stomach grows, so does your milk supply.

## Weight loss:

- Baby's weight may drop up to 10% the first few days/ That's usually normal. It's extra water weight.
- Babies are usually back to birth weight by two weeks.

## Starting solids:

- Most babies are ready to start eating solid foods around six months old, or when they can sit up independently and place food safely in their mouths.
- Giving solids too soon is linked to higher rates of respiratory and stomach illness.



**Continue breastfeeding after your baby starts solids. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding for two years, or more if desired.**

Talk with your health care team about the Baby Led Weaning method for introducing solids.

- Babies feed themselves solid food.
- No need for jarred foods or purees.
- Breastfeeding can continue during pregnancy, and an older child can breastfeed along with an infant.

[sutterhealth.org/breastfeed](https://sutterhealth.org/breastfeed)

\*Meek, J. Y., & Noble, L. (2022). Policy statement: Breastfeeding and the use of human milk.

## Feeding on Cue

Feeding babies whenever they show cues meets the needs of mother and baby.

### Baby feeding cues:

- Sticks tongue out.
- Brings hands to mouth.
- Turns toward a hand or object near the mouth.
- Crying is a late sign. Feed your baby when early cues happen to keep your baby from becoming too fussy.

### Babies nurse for comfort as well as food. Nurse as often as baby wants.

- Calming hormones released in your body and baby's body during breastfeeding help your baby relax and fall asleep.
- Comfort sucking feels soft and fast. The drinking suck feels long and strong.

### Finish the first breast first

- Milk fats released at the end of feeding make baby feel full and pop off or fall asleep. Then switch to the second side.
- Offer both breasts each feeding and alternate the side you start on.

### Feed frequently.

- Feed on cue and no longer than three hours apart for the first six weeks. This helps build a good milk supply.
- Babies may have long feedings called cluster feeding. This is common in the evening over the first three months. It also happens when baby has a growth spurt.

### Avoid pacifiers and bottles. This will help your baby's latch and increase your milk supply.

- The flow from a bottle is faster than the breast, which can confuse your baby.
- Baby sucking a pacifier or bottle means your breast gets less stimulation to make milk.
- If you plan to offer a bottle, wait at least six weeks after birth.



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