

Information on Lactation & Nursing

Benefits of Nursing

- Includes all the necessary nutrients for infant development: water, fat carbohydrates, fatty-acids, protein, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, cytokines, and growth factors (Couto et al., 2020; Mohrbacher, 2020.)
- It provides immunity factors that eliminate microorganisms and prevent infant infection.
- Human milk is anti-inflammatory and has healing properties (Mohrbacher, 2020.)
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) decreased by 50%, improves brain function, cell function and stability, prevention of diabetes and cardiovascular disease, asthma, and some childhood cancers.
- Helps decrease bleeding and infection for nursing-parent during postpartum, and reduces risk of postpartum stress, anxiety and depression (Couto et al., 2020; Mohrbacher, 2020.)

Infant Feeding Cues

- Fluttering eyelids
- Hands near face
- Lip smacking
- Rooting
- Nurse during early feeding cues
- Calm baby before nursing (Mohrbacher, 2020)
- Making sounds
- Hand sucking
- Fussing, tense body (late sign)
- Crying (late sign)

Physiology of Suckling

- Baby initially has rapid sucking to encourage letdown
- Once milk letdown occurs, sucking slows down to about 1 suck per second to allow the mouth to fill with milk before swallowing.
- Bottom jaw drops a bit lower and there is a pause in sucking as the baby swallows milk
- Pattern of sucking: 2-3 sucks, followed by a pause
- Initially your baby sucks to get colostrum; within 4 days it will turn into mature milk
- Infants nurse on demand, 8-12x in 24 hours
- Frequent nursing every 1-2 hours or more (known as cluster feeding) helps signal to your body to make the amount of milk your baby needs.
- Non-nutritive sucking can calm your baby, and provide loving reassurance and affection
- Nursing creates a unique bond that is shared between you and your baby (*Is My Baby Getting Enough Milk?* - La Leche League USA, 2020)

Achieving a Good Latch

- Baby has flanged lips, a wide mouth full of areolar tissue
- Appears latched at least a 1/2" past the nipple.

- Head in sniffing position, chin and cheeks touching breast/chest while nursing
- Baby's temple and jaw will have movement
- Round, full cheeks with no dimpling & no clicking noises
- For a deeper latch try a semi-reclined position & baby-led nursing, support with pillows
- Break suction with finger if latch appears swallow or is painful (Boersma et al., 2019; Breastfeeding Positions, Latch, and Positioning - La Leche League (n.d.), Mohrbacher, 202)
- Aim nipple towards roof of mouth. Support head, tickle lip with nipple, wait for mouth to open big to get a wide latch.
- Chin first

Signs of Milk transfer & Satisfied Baby

- Audible periods of gulping
- Baby appears content after feeds with relaxed body, arms, and hands
- Baby's hands may be tight fists initially, then become relaxed and open once they are full
- The nursed side feels lighter after feeds
- Baby is nursing often: at least 8x in 24 hours
- 1/2/3 Rule: Baby has 1 void and 1 stool daily that increases by 1 each day until baby has at least 3 stools and 6+ voids by day 5.
- Stool transitions from meconium to loose yellow stools by day 5
- Urine is pale yellow with no rust colored deposits ("brick dust"), which are urate crystals
- Regained birth weight by 10-14 days old.
- Gaining 5.5-8.5oz/weekly on average (*Is My Baby Getting Enough Milk? - La Leche League USA*, 2020; Latch, and Positioning - La Leche League (n.d.), Mohrbacher, 2020.)

When to Reach Out to Midwife and Lactation Specialist

- Baby not latching or nursing frequently (8x/24hr)
- Nursing or latching is causing pain
- Baby is not nursing long enough or frequently pulls off
- Baby is not meeting minimum weight gain by 2 weeks old
- Low milk supply
- Feeling overwhelmed and need nursing support and guidance
- Other signs of inadequate milk transfer (*Is My Baby Getting Enough Milk? - La Leche League USA*, 2020)

Client Resources

- [Breastfeeding Positions, Latch, and Positioning](#)
- [Rhythms and Routines. La Leche League](#)
- [Is my baby getting enough milk? - La Leche League USA](#)
- *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* by Diane Wiessinger (2011)

References

Boersma, S., Gallagher, S., & Petrou, T. (2019). Breastfeeding protocol: Positioning and latching, https://breastfeedingresourcesontario.ca/sites/default/files/pdf/BFI_Positioning_and_Latching_web3.pdf

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Couto, G., Dias, V. M., & De Jesus Oliveira, I. (2020). Benefits of exclusive breastfeeding: An integrative review. Nursing Practice Today. <https://doi.org/10.18502/npt.v7i4.4034>

Is my baby getting enough milk?. La Leche League USA. (2020, February 19). <https://llusa.org/is-my-baby-getting-enough-milk/>

Mohrbacher, N. (2020). Breastfeeding answers: A guide for helping families. Nancy Mohrbacher Solutions, Inc.