

# Breastfeeding is Important

## Provider Notes

Breast milk is the best milk for the first 12 months of life

### Common Challenges

#### Breastfeeding is Not Always Easy

Moms and babies need time and practice to establish breastfeeding. Moms can experience sore nipples, low or high milk supply, and fullness. They need your support. However, there are a lot of resources to help them and you with each of these common hurdles:

- **WIC** – provides breastfeeding education and support via breastfeeding peer helpers, lactation specialists, and International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC). WIC also assists eligible moms with sourcing and using a breast pump.
- **Resources:**
  - WIC Phone 1-800-755-GROW (4769)
  - Lactation Consultants in Ohio: <http://www.ohio-olca.org/> or <http://www.ohio-olca.org/find-an-ibclc.html>
  - [womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding](http://womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding)

### How Often to Feed:

- Within the first week of life, breastfeeding is encouraged 8-12 times a day to help establish the milk supply.
- In the first 24 hours of life, newborns will consume on average 7mL of colostrum per feeding, with a daily intake of 37mL.
- On day two, feedings increase slightly. Each day, baby will take more frequent feedings as the stomach expands, increasing to the goal of 8-12 feedings in a 24-hour period, between days 3-5.

Make sure babies are not being fed juice, cow's milk, or cow's milk alternatives. Beverages other than breast milk may interfere with baby's growth and development.

Remind parents that baby knows when baby is hungry. Encourage parents to learn, watch and listen for these signs of hunger that arise before their baby cries:

#### Hunger Cues

- Flexes fists and hands
- Smacks lips
- Turns head
- Sucks on fist
- Makes fussy sounds
- Restless after waking

#### Signs of Fullness

- Relaxes
- Stops sucking
- Turns head away
- Closes lips
- Spits nipple out

### Is it Safe to Breastfeed and Use Medications, Smoke, Drink or Use Drugs?

- If your patient is taking medications, check with <https://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/newtoxnet/lactmed.htm> for any needed breastfeeding changes.
- It is best not to smoke when pregnant or breastfeeding. However, if your patient is not quitting, breastfeeding is still recommended because it protects baby from health problems caused by parent smoking, including sudden infant death syndrome.
- Avoid alcohol, especially in large amounts. An occasional drink is okay. Delay breastfeeding 2-3 hours after drinking alcohol.
- Breastfeeding is not advisable if mom is using or dependent on illicit drugs. These drugs will harm mom and baby.

### When Should Breastfeeding Stop?

The AAP recommends breastfeeding for the first year of life and beyond for as long as mutually desired by mom and baby. Breastfeeding does not need to stop when baby starts eating solids. Baby still gets nutrition, disease protection and antibodies for as long as mom and baby continue to breastfeed.

### How Do I Support Moms and Breastfeeding?

- Support moms considering breastfeeding by connecting them to resources listed at left.
- Help them identify how to breastfeed when they return to work. If they need a breast pump, the resources listed at left and WIC (if WIC eligible) can assist moms in getting and using a pump, sometimes at no charge.
- Encourage breast milk if there is concern about allergies. Breastfeeding is a known protection against allergy risks. If baby seems to have the rare scenario of an allergy to breast milk, seek an allergist's advice and counsel mom to temporarily follow a diet free of the suspected food allergy.

### Resources

- <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/disease/index.htm>
- <http://healthvermont.gov/wic/food-feeding/months0-12/Newborn.aspx>
- Healthy Bites: A Wisconsin Guide for Improving Childhood Nutrition
- <http://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/breastfeeding-guide/BreastfeedingGuide-General-English.pdf>