

Breastfeeding and your baby



What to expect from my baby?

Birth to 6 Months

Babies may feed very often (i.e. between 6 and 12 times a day from both breasts). They start off with very small stomachs that gradually stretch to accommodate bigger feeds. Feeding stimulates your breasts to make enough milk for your baby. As you feed your baby, your body makes more milk for your baby, this is often referred to as 'supply and demand'.

Breast milk is easy for your baby to digest. This means fewer tummy aches, but it also means that your baby may be hungry again quite quickly soon after a feed. It's normal for your baby to feed frequently, particularly in the early weeks. With frequent feeding it is important to try and rest when your baby is sleeping.



The following information can help you feel confident that your baby is getting enough milk. If you feel your baby is not showing the signs below it is important to speak with your Maternal and Child Health Nurse or GP.



Key tips

Wet and dirty nappies

The number of wet nappies increase after your milk 'comes in', expect at least 6–8 soaked cloth nappies or 4–5 heavy disposable nappies in 24 hours.

Very young, breastfed babies usually do several bowel motions (poos) a day. Even if your baby seems to be pushing hard, the poo is usually very soft. After a few weeks most babies have a poo every day but some only poo every few days and it will still be soft.

Weight gain

Your baby's weight will drop after birth but they will regain their birth weight by around 2 weeks of age. In the first three months of your baby's life there is an average weight gain of around 150-200 grams per week. Some weeks babies have smaller gains, and

other weeks they may have larger gains, as babies grow in spurts.

Note: if you have concerns about your babies weight, please consult with a health professional

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Crying

Many babies can cry for up to 3 hours a day, sometimes more, in the early weeks. Babies cry to communicate many of their needs. Sometimes they are hungry, uncomfortable, they may need sleep, or they may just like being held for comforting. Some babies still cry when they are being held.

Sleep

All babies are different, and their sleep requirements vary. In the first few weeks after birth:

- Babies sleep much of the day and night
- Most wake 2 to 4 times during the night for feeds
- Babies have shorter sleep cycles than adults and wake or stir about every 20-40 minutes

Between 3 to 6 months of age:

- Some babies have 2 or 3 long sleeps during the day, while others just have short naps
- Most babies have learned to sleep more at night than they do during the day, but babies will often continue to wake for feeds overnight 2-3 times and this is still normal

Sleeping through the night or for long periods in the early days is uncommon for most babies. If your baby is lethargic or sleepy with feeds, seek advice from a health professional or your doctor.



How can I find more information?

Phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maternal and Child Health - Early Pregnancy and Parenting support line (02) 5124 1775, or• Central Health Intake (CHI) on (02) 5124 9977
Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding your baby information session, book online via Eventbrite• www.health.act.gov.au/breastfeeding• www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au
Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your GP• Make an appointment for assessment and ongoing breastfeeding information and support on (02) 5124 1775

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Acknowledgement of Country





Canberra Health Services acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people. Canberra Health Services respects their continuing culture and connections to the land and the unique contributions they make to the life of this area. Canberra Health Services also acknowledges and welcomes Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples who are part of the community we serve.



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 in larger print

 or hear it in audio

please telephone (02) 5124 0000.



If you need translating and interpreting service – please telephone 131 450.

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