

Breastfeeding

Breast milk is considered to be the best food for your baby. It provides all the essential nutrients they need during the first six months of life, protects them from many diseases, strengthens the emotional bond, and promotes their intellectual development. It is also an environmentally friendly and economical option for families.

How should it be done?

The breast should be offered as soon as possible after birth, through direct skin-to-skin contact between mother and baby.

In the first few days after giving birth, a mother's body produces a yellowish milk called *colostrum*, which is rich in protein and antibodies. Mature milk begins to be produced as the days go by. At each feeding, the milk is initially more watery and rich in sugars, and towards the end it becomes denser and richer in fats.

Duration of feedings and intervals between them

The breast should be offered on demand, without following strict schedules. There is no need to monitor how long the baby is feeding or how much milk he or she is drinking, as the baby regulates his or her own needs and the mother's body adapts milk production. Every baby and every mother needs different amounts of time. Feeding should continue until the baby spontaneously lets go of the breast. It is not necessary for the baby to feed from both breasts at each feed, but at least one breast should be emptied.

Correct breastfeeding technique

Good breastfeeding technique prevents problems such as cracked nipples, which can be very painful and are one of the main reasons for giving up breastfeeding. Regardless of the position chosen (sitting, lying down, etc.), **it is important that there is close contact between mother and baby** (depending on the position: belly button to belly button), **and that the baby has both**



Positioning
and
latching on

lips wide open around the nipple and part of the areola, with the tongue under the nipple.

Other recommendations

- The only hygiene requirement for the mother is to have a shower every day.
- Eating a varied and balanced diet is important. You do not need to eat more. Drink enough water.
- Learning how to express milk and store it in the refrigerator or freezer can be useful, so that other people can help when you are unable to be with your baby. Follow the guidelines for hygiene and storage. Breast milk can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 4 days and in the freezer for up to 6 months.
- If you still smoke or drink alcohol, now is a good time to quit, as these substances can be passed on to your baby through breast milk.
- Always consult a healthcare professional before taking any medication to ensure that it is safe during breastfeeding.

Support and help

Healthcare professionals and breastfeeding support groups can offer advice to ensure that you and your baby enjoy a positive and satisfying breastfeeding experience.