



Breastfeeding Tips

for 6 Months and Beyond

The Benefits of Breastmilk Keep Growing

Breastfeeding for 6 months is a great accomplishment. Great job, mom! This brochure will give you tips to keep it up as your baby starts to grow and gain more skills. Did you know the benefits of breastfeeding grow the longer you breastfeed?

Health benefits:

- Breastmilk protects against illnesses for as long as breastfeeding continues. This is especially helpful as your baby goes to more public places.
- Since breastfeeding babies are generally sick less often, you will miss less work as a breastfeeding mother.
- The longer your child breastfeeds, the less likely he is to become overweight or develop diabetes later in life.
- At each stage of your baby's growth, your milk will change to match your baby's needs.
- The longer you breastfeed, the less likely you are to develop breast cancer, ovarian cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.



Emotional benefits:

- Nursing can be a great way to comfort your older baby or toddler when he is ill, tired, upset or hurt. Many moms feel this is a great benefit of breastfeeding their older baby.

These are just a few reasons why organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend breastfeeding for 2 years and beyond, for as long as the mother and baby desire.

What if my Baby is Teething?

Breastfeeding can continue even when your baby is teething. Physically, it is impossible to bite and nurse at the same time because your baby's tongue is between his bottom teeth and your breast. However, teething can cause your baby's gums to hurt and itch. Some babies may rub their gums on their mom's breast to soothe this soreness.

Here are some tips:

- Biting usually happens when a baby is almost finished nursing. Watch for signs of fullness, then remove him from your breast.
- If you feel your baby begin to bite down, gently insert a clean finger into the corner of his mouth to break the suction and remove him from your breast.
- Gently but firmly say, "No," and wait a few minutes before offering to breastfeed again.



How do I Introduce Solid Foods?

Breastmilk is all your baby needs for about the first 6 months of life. Beyond 6 months, babies need breastmilk and solid foods to get enough calories, protein, iron and zinc.



At around 6 months, your baby can:

- Sit up alone or with help.
- Hold his head up steady and straight.
- Be interested in the foods you eat and how you eat them.
- Close his lips over a spoon and keep food in his mouth.
- Swallow food without gagging, coughing or choking.
- Show he is full by leaning back, turning away, pushing the spoon away or closing his lips together.

Breastmilk will continue to be the most important source of nutrition until your baby is 1 year old.



Scan the QR code for more information on how to introduce solid foods.

Can I Nurse my Older Infant or Toddler in Public?

Breastfeeding in public is protected by law in every state. You can breastfeed anywhere you and your baby have the right to be.

Nursing an older baby or toddler in public can be trickier than nursing a younger baby. Older infants and toddlers are easily distracted, do not like to be covered and tend to move around a lot when nursing.

As your baby gets older, it is easier to predict his nursing schedule. If you do not feel comfortable with nursing in public, try the following:

- Breastfeed right before you leave your home or in a comfortable nursing location.
- Offer expressed milk in a cup or bottle.
- Offer a healthy snack.



Breastfeeding: **THE LAW**

Chapter 165,
Texas Health
and Safety Code

A mother is entitled to breastfeed her baby or express breastmilk in any location in which a mother is authorized to be.



Remember, Texas law supports your right to breastfeed in public.

Distracted Breastfeeding

Around 4-6 months, some babies begin to get distracted when at the breast. They have trouble staying focused because they are interested in the world around them.



Here are some ideas to reduce distractions during breastfeeding:

- Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed.
- Sing a familiar song to your baby.
- Give your baby a favorite toy or blanket to keep their interest.

Nursing Strike

Some breastfeeding babies may suddenly cut back or stop altogether. This event is known as a nursing strike. If your baby is under 12 months, this is usually not a sign that they are ready to wean. These periods are temporary.

Some things that may cause nursing strikes are:

- Teething.
- An ear infection or other illness.
- A change in your diet, soap or deodorant.
- A change in their typical routine.

How should you respond?

- Do not force your baby to the breast as this may make things worse.
- Pump to maintain your milk supply while your baby is not breastfeeding.
- Make sure your baby is getting enough to eat by feeding him expressed breastmilk, formula or solid foods.
- Offer your breast when your baby is falling asleep or waking up.

Should I Continue Nursing if I Become Pregnant?

You do not need to quit nursing during a healthy pregnancy. Breastfeeding does not take any nutrients away from your unborn baby.

The taste of your breastmilk will change during pregnancy. This may cause older infants and toddlers to wean, though many continue to nurse until well after the new baby is born.

As your body begins to produce colostrum for the new baby, you may notice a change in your toddler's diapers. Don't worry – this is completely normal and is due to colostrum's natural laxative effect.

If you have any medical problems with your pregnancy, talk to your doctor about whether you should continue breastfeeding.



Why Does Weaning Occur?

Your baby may begin the gradual process of weaning around 6 months of age when you introduce solid foods. Weaning continues as your baby becomes interested in other activities besides nursing. By the time your baby is 1-year-old, many babies are often only nursing a few times a day.

Some babies may lose interest and wean around 18 months to 2 years of age. Others may nurse longer, but only nurse a few times a day – like in the morning, at nap time or before bed. Any amount that your toddler wants to nurse is normal.

There is no set time to wean from breastfeeding. It is a very personal decision for you and your child.

For Help With Questions or Breastfeeding Support

Call Your WIC Office at

Your Local WIC Office

Breastfeeding Specialist

Get more information at BreastmilkCounts.com or call the Texas Lactation Support Hotline at 855-550-6667.

BREASTFEEDING

is worth the effort.

WIC's expert breastfeeding support includes lactation consultants, peer counselors, breastfeeding classes and a statewide hotline. WIC clients get healthy food, too!



SCAN ME

WIC can help from pregnancy through age 5.

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