

## Feeding Your Baby

The first days your newborn baby's belly is tiny. He or she does not need a lot of milk with each feeding to be full. Your baby may want to eat as often as every 1 to 3 hours. Frequent feeding helps increase your milk supply and gives your baby practice at sucking and swallowing. You may be able to hear your baby sucking and swallowing the breast milk. Most babies who are getting breast milk should not be fed infant formula in the first few days. If you are concerned about meeting your baby's needs, talk to a lactation consultant, a doula, your midwife, or your baby's nurse or doctor, right away to find out how to address any breastfeeding problems and determine the best way to meet your baby's needs.

### First Weeks and Months

As your baby grows, his or her belly also grows. Your baby will gradually be able to drink more breast milk at each feeding. Over the first few weeks and months, the time between feedings will start to get longer, on average about every 2 to 4 hours for most exclusively breastfed babies. Some babies may feed as often as every hour at times, often called cluster feeding, or may have a longer sleep interval of 4 to 5 hours. How often your baby feeds might change depending on the time of day. Some feeding sessions may be long, and others short. that is okay. Babies will generally take what they need at each feeding and stop eating when they are full. They should seem content and drowsy after feeding when they have had enough milk your baby will breastfeed about 8 to 12 times in 24 hours.

### 6-12 Months

Breastfed babies' feeding patterns (how often and how long they feed) vary and will likely change as they grow and start eating more solid foods. continue to follow your baby's cues and breastfeed when you notice signs of hunger (sometimes called "breastfeeding on demand"). If your baby seems to be less interested in breastfeeding after you introduce solids, try breastfeeding first before you offer solids. Your breast milk is the most important source of nutrition, even after you start feeding your baby solids.

### 12 to 24 Months

The number of times a day a toddler breastfeeds varies. Some want to breastfeed only before bed or in the morning, while others continue to drink breast milk as a bigger portion of their daily diet. Continue to follow your child's cues to decide when he or she is hungry and wants to breastfeed.