



Sage Hill Pediatrics

FAMILY WELLNESS WITH A PERSONAL TOUCH

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Of all the handouts I've written, I believe this one has helped the most people. Breastfeeding is an all-natural undertaking that more-often-than-not needs a lot of support. This handout is intended to complement—not replace—good old-fashioned advice, given in person, and an actual hands-on lactation assessment, performed at the bedside. Also, it goes without saying that whenever breastfeeding is challenging, babies needs to be followed closely by a physician to monitor growth.
-Dr. Rodbell

Dr. Rodbell's Guide to Successful Breastfeeding*

How Often Should I Nurse My Baby?

Newborns need amazing amounts of calories. They usually feed every 1-2 hours during the day, and every 2-3 hours at night--sometimes more often, and sometimes less often. There is no such thing as a "greedy" newborn. Feed whenever your baby is hungry. *Every feeding that occurs during the day is a feeding that doesn't have to take place at night.*

Growth Spurts

Newborns may go on "feeding frenzies," seeming to nurse all the time. Nursing more often signals your body to produce more milk, and "growth spurts" usually stop after 24-48 hours, as your production increases.

Feed At The Earliest Signs Of Hunger

Early signs can be very subtle, like making sucking noises with the lips; waking up from a nap; or even just beginning to stir while sleeping. The more hungry they become, the more quickly they eat, and the more GI symptoms they develop. Most babies are very hungry by the time they begin to cry.

Burp Early And Often

This simple measure helps prevent hiccups, spitting-up, over-feeding, and fussiness and gassiness after feeds. After 3 minutes of rhythmic swallowing, most babies build up an air pocket and are ready to burp, even if they seem content to continue feeding. Air that isn't expelled through burping may move on to the intestines and cause uncomfortable symptoms. Babies who are burped regularly are also less likely to fall asleep while feeding, which makes for shorter, more efficient feedings, and helps prevent sore nipples for nursing mothers.

Economize the Feedings

Frequent daytime feedings are only possible if each feeding is efficient. Take your baby off the breast when you no longer hear sustained, rhythmic swallowing. If your baby falls asleep while nursing, remove from the breast *before* he or she falls asleep, and burp. *This may sound simple and obvious, but in practice it is counter-intuitive and usually need a lot of reinforcement. If feedings seem to be dragging on, revisit this step first.*

Day/Night Cycle

If your baby seems to be awake all night and asleep all day, you're in good company. All newborns spend some time asleep during the day and some time awake during the night. Here's what you can do to establish a healthy day/night cycle, with maximum awake time during the day and maximum asleep time at night.

During the day: Feed at the earliest signs of hunger. Keep your baby "comfortable but not cozy". When your baby is asleep, don't swaddle or wrap any more than necessary. Let your baby nap in a room with light and noise, rather than in a bassinet in a quiet room. Discourage others from lulling or rocking your baby to sleep.

At night: Swaddle. Turn off all lights, TV, radio. Don't play with your baby during night time feedings: Keep them "brief and boring."

**Nursing is a 'package deal;' over time more and more of the pieces fall into place. Keep this guide and refer back to it periodically over the next few days. Each time you review it, you will gain insight. Slowly but surely, you'll tweak the process until eventually it will come naturally, and you won't even have to think about it.*

This information is meant to serve as a guide and reference, not as a replacement for medical advice delivered to you by a qualified healthcare professional.

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