



## Guidelines for Establishing Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is a very individual thing, no two mothers and babies are the same. It is important that you understand your baby and his/her needs. Feed your baby to need in the first few days and your breasts should start to feel full by day 3 or 4.

During each breastfeed the consistency of the breastmilk changes. Usually at the beginning of a feed the milk will look watery, at the end of the feed the milk tends to look creamier. At the completion of the breastfeed the breasts will feel softer. However, milk will always be present as the breasts start to refill as soon as the baby sucks at the breast.

Each mother's rate of milk transfer from the breast to the baby is different. Babies take varying times to feed, and the rate of transfer may also vary with the time of day. Mothers are encouraged not to time feeds, it is more important to know how the baby feeds. For example is the baby content after the feed.

Often mothers find that their breastmilk supply is greatest in the mornings and the baby MAY only need one breast, by the evening the supply may have decreased a little, so it may be necessary to offer both breasts to ensure that the baby is completely satisfied.

**REMEMBER** that babies are quite different, some babies will only ever need one breast and others will always need both. It is important that at every feed both breasts are offered.

Make sure that your baby is well attached to the breast to ensure an adequate feed



### Some signs that the baby is well attached to the breast are:

- It will not hurt (after the initial attachment discomfort)
- The mouth still be wide open
- The sucking action will be rhythmical, after some quick short sucks the baby begins to take longer more rhythmical deep sucks taking a brief pause. This pattern will continue until he/she is satisfied. Whilst breastfeeding it is important not to distract this sucking pattern by tickling the baby under the chin or stroking the sole of the foot
- When the baby has had enough he/she will let go of the nipple, or you will notice that he/she is not longer having any deep rhythmical sucking.

### If your baby is NOT well attached the following signs will be noticeable:

- It may hurt for the whole feed
- The baby's cheeks may dimple when he/she sucks
- Whilst the baby is sucking he/she may make a lot of noise
- The sucking pattern may be very short and fast
- The baby's mouth may NOT be open very wide.
- Your nipple may be misshapen when your baby comes off the breast.



Tips to ensure a good start to successful breastfeeding:

- Have a comfortable place to breastfeed your baby, lean back with good back support, feet raised if this is more comfortable (phone books can be useful footstools)
- Have a glass of water close by
- Ensure that the baby is properly attached, have the baby's body near yours – his chest to your chest, with chin well in to your breast.
- Ensure the baby completely softens the first breast before offering the second breast

Initially as the milk comes in, your breasts will feel very full and uncomfortable for a few days.

Until the milk supply becomes established this 'fullness' may continue to happen for a few weeks.

The wearing of a well supporting maternity bra and using cold packs in the early days of breastfeeding maybe helpful.

Some women find their nipples feel sensitive after the birth of the baby but this is normal, generally only lasting a few days.

In 24 hours 8 feeds or more is normal. There is no need to time your baby's feeds, but it is important in the first 4-6 weeks to ensure that your baby has at least six feeds in 24 hours.

It normally takes about six weeks for lactation to become established

Resting during the day when possible to get adequate sleep, and a well balanced diet are all essential to get breastfeeding off to a good start and enjoy your baby

