



Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the healthiest choice for your baby. Doing so can result in less illnesses, infections and certain types of skin irritations. Also, death rates at 11 months of age are 21% lower among breastfed babies.^{1,2} Breastfeeding can lower a mother's risk of breast and ovarian cancers and keep bones strong.¹ Many leading health organizations suggest that infants breastfeed for at least 12 months, with exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months. This means that babies are not given any foods or liquids other than breast milk for the first six months.³

Tips for breastfeeding success

With proper support, most women can successfully breastfeed their infants.⁴ To ready yourself, read about breastfeeding and take a class while you're pregnant. Find friends or relatives who have breastfed their children, and ask them for help. You should breastfeed as soon as you are able – ideally, within half an hour

of birth.⁵ You may feel that this doesn't come naturally to you or to your baby, but with patience most mother-and-baby pairs catch on quickly. Your doctor, nurse and the hospital's lactation consultant are all there to help.

During your hospital stay:⁵

- Keep your baby in the room with you.
- Avoid giving your baby pacifiers or formula feedings.
- Put your baby to your breast when the baby cries – don't worry about overfeeding or spoiling your baby.
- Speak with the hospital's lactation consultant if you have any questions.

Once you and your baby are home:

- Encourage breastfeeding at least every two to three hours, or more often if your baby wants.²
- Let your baby nurse as long as he or she wants to.⁶
- Avoid giving your baby a pacifier until breastfeeding is well established.⁵
- Avoid supplementing with formula. And, do not give your baby any water, juice, milk or food until 6 months of age, unless your pediatrician suggests otherwise.⁵

Storing pumped milk⁸

If you express milk when you are away from your child, use the following guidelines to determine how to keep the milk fresh.

- Store milk in clean screw-cap bottles or bags designed for breast milk storage. Regular plastic bags may tear or leak easily.
- Label the milk with the date. Don't add fresh milk to milk that's been frozen or refreeze milk that has thawed.
- Heat milk by running it under warm water – never microwave it.

Location	Temperature	Duration	Comments
Countertop, table	Room temperature (up to 77 °F)	6-8 hours	Containers should be covered and kept cool; covering the container with a cool towel may keep milk cooler.
Insulated cooler bag	5-39 °F	24 hours	Keep ice packs touching milk containers at all times. Limit opening cooler bag.
Refrigerator	39 °F	5 days	Store milk in the back of the main body of the refrigerator.
Freezer			
Freezer compartment of a refrigerator	5 °F	2 weeks	Store milk toward the back of the freezer, where temperature is most steady. Milk stored for longer lengths of time in the ranges listed is safe, but may be lower quality as some of the lipids in the milk degrade.
Freezer compartment of a refrigerator with separate doors	0 °F	3-6 months	
Chest or upright deep freezer	-4 °F	6-12 months	
Reference: Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine			

Working mothers and breastfeeding³

You may have concerns about breastfeeding and returning to work. Most employers are happy to give you the support you need.

Meeting your breastfeeding needs benefits them as well.

- Employees are less likely to miss work to take care of a sick baby because the baby is healthier.
- Health care costs are lower since both mother and baby are healthier.
- Employees who get support for breastfeeding are happier and do better work.

Your rights in the workplace⁷

Federal law protects your right to pump milk for your baby during the workday. Employers must give employees unpaid break time to express milk as needed, for one year after the child's birth. And, they must provide a place for employees to pump breast milk, other than a bathroom. Employers with fewer than 50 employees do not have to meet these requirements if doing so causes the company undue hardship.

Visit anthem.com for more ways to get healthy – and stay healthy.

Resources

For more information about breastfeeding, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics' website at aap.org, and look up breastfeeding under "Children's Health Topics." Or get information and support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' site on women's health, at womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding. For information specific to breastfeeding or expressing milk once you return to work, read the National Business Group on Health's toolkit on breastfeeding in the workplace, available under "Health Topics" at businessgrouphealth.org.



Sources

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- 3 National Business Group on Health, Center for Prevention and Health Services, *Investing in Workplace Breastfeeding Programs and Policies* (December 8, 2009): businessgrouphealth.org
- 4 World Health Organization, *Breastfeeding* (accessed September 9, 2010): who.int
- 5 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *The CDC Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions* (2005): cdc.gov
- 6 La Leche League International, *How Can I Tell If My Baby Is Getting Enough Milk?* (October 14, 2009): lil.org
- 7 National Conference of State Legislatures, *Breastfeeding Laws* (March 2010): ncsl.org
- 8 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Proper Handling and Storage of Human Milk* (March 4, 2010): cdc.gov

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