

NURTURE THE FUTURE

Congratulations on the birth of your new baby!

The first few days of being a mum can be tricky as you and your baby are getting over the birth. Most mothers who have breastfed will tell you that learning how to breastfeed can take a while, so give yourself time. The valuable benefits of breastfeeding will last you and your baby a lifetime so it is worthwhile carrying on. Things will soon feel much better!



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What to expect

Giving birth can be an exhausting experience. The first few days may be tough – don't be too hard on yourself. It's important for you to take time to recover. Rest, enjoy your baby and focus on establishing breastfeeding.

First 3 days in the first few days after birth, your breasts will usually feel soft as you feed baby with a very concentrated special milk (colostrum).

Around the 3rd day your breasts will usually become warmer and much firmer; they may feel uncomfortable as your milk flow increases.



How often should I feed my baby?

In the first weeks, it may seem like your baby wants to feed very often or that you can never “put your baby down”. This is normal newborn behaviour. Breastfeeding is SO much more than the simple transfer of milk to a baby; it is love, security and comfort. Keeping your baby close and breastfeeding frequently will help your baby make the transition from the “womb to the world” smoothly.

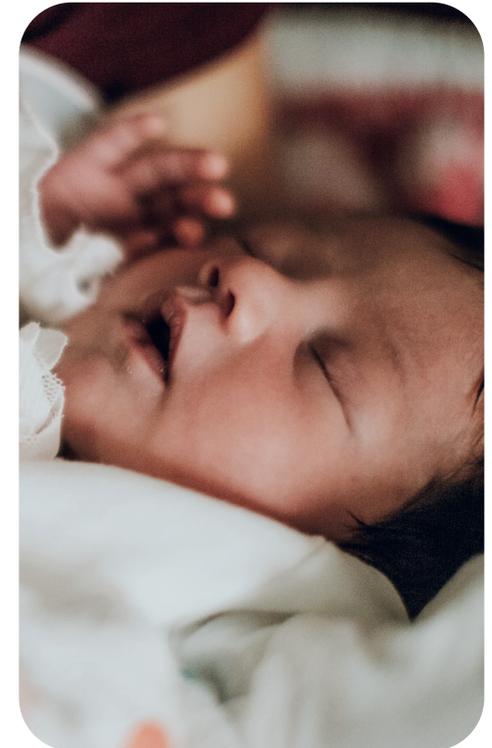
Early signs baby is thinking about needing a feed

- Restlessness
- Sucking their fist or fingers
- Making murmuring sounds
- Turning their head and opening their mouth (rooting)

It may help to try and feed your baby during these “early feeding cues” as it may be easier to attach baby before they start crying.

Top tips for early breastfeeding

- ✓ A well attached baby will be able to feed effectively
- ✓ Ask for help if you are not sure your baby is well attached
- ✓ Aim to breastfeed your baby about 8 – 12 times in 24 hours
- ✓ The best way to prevent uncomfortable full breasts on day 3 – 5 is to breastfeed frequently.



Positioning your baby for breastfeeding

Mothers and babies learn to breastfeed together.

Getting the positioning and attachment right can take a little time; ask for help if you are not sure.

- Hold your baby really close to your body, baby's chest should snuggle close to your breast. Ensure that baby's head and body is facing you
- Move baby so their nose is opposite your nipple
- Bring baby's chin in close to your breast – head is now well tilted back
- Your nipple should now be pointing up your baby's nose. Wait for your baby to open their mouth wide. Bring your baby to the breast



If your baby is well attached breastfeeding should be comfortable.

If feeding is painful - ask for help as soon as possible from a midwife, health visitor or trained Peer Supporter.

Keeping your breasts comfortable when your milk increases

These measures are particularly helpful before breastfeeding, as it is easier for baby to attach to a softer breast.

- Warmth stimulates milk flow and will help soften the breast apply warm flannels or have a warm bath or shower
- Massage your breasts to soften and promote milk flow
- Hand express to soften the nipple and areola*
- Use a breast pump gently to soften the breast but make sure you prepare the breast with warmth and massage before using it
- Apply cool compresses e.g. cold flannels (keep them ready in a plastic bag in the fridge)
- Make sure your bra fits comfortably and avoid wearing underwired bras until your breasts have settled down
- Taking a pain reliever or simple anti-inflammatory medication can help reduce discomfort



Early breast fullness usually resolves quickly with the simple measures outlined above.

If pain and swelling persist or you feel unwell with flu like symptoms or high temperature speak to your Midwife, Health Visitor or Doctor.

*Search on UNICEF website for "hand expression video"



How well is your baby breastfeeding?

- ✓ Has your baby had 8 feeds or more in 24 hours?
- ✓ Is your baby feeding for between 5 and 40 minutes at each feed?
- ✓ Is your baby generally calm and relaxed whilst feeding and seems content after most feeds?
- ✓ When your baby is over 3 days old, can you hear baby swallowing frequently during feeds?
- ✓ Does your baby have 6 or more wet nappies a day (after first 5 days)?
- ✓ Does your baby produce at least 2 yellow coloured poos that are more than the size of a £2 coin (after the first 5 days)?
- ✓ Is your baby back to birth weight by 14 days?

If the answer is no to any of these questions, talk to your Midwife or Health Visitor.

Breastfeeding and bed sharing

Many mothers find that feeding their baby lying down in bed helps them cope with night time feeding and helps them get more rest but this must be done safely.

Top Tips for all naps, not just for night time:

- Discuss night time feeding - ask your Midwife or Health Visitor to show you how to position yourself and your baby safely for breastfeeding lying down in bed
- Your baby should not be between two adults when feeding in bed
- **Never** wrap or swaddle your baby – your baby needs to use their arms and legs to communicate with you whilst in the bed
- **Never** put your baby in a sleeping bag whilst feeding
- Position baby's cot close to your bed to make transferring baby easier
- Lie baby on a cot sheet whilst feeding and use this to help transfer baby to the cot

How your family can support your wellbeing

New mums need support, reassurance and someone to listen to them.

Look after the new mother and baby, support mum by doing practical things so she can focus on the baby.

- Be ready to listen and be supportive if the new mum is feeling a bit overwhelmed and emotional
- Limit visitors - make sure a new mother isn't overwhelmed
- Help with baby's care - e.g changing nappies, bathing baby,
- Do the cleaning, cooking and washing
- Make sure the new mother gets lots of rest
- Hold and cuddle baby when mum needs to rest
- Tell the new mother often that she is doing a brilliant job!

Help the mother to get comfortable before starting a feed, bring her drinks and snacks and make sure she has a glass of water to hand, breastfeeding can be thirsty work!

A healthy diet for you and your baby

Eating well is important for all new mothers. It will help you recover from the birth and give you energy to care for your new baby. Eat and drink regularly throughout the day.

Healthy snacks:

- A piece of fruit
- Vegetable sticks with soft cheese or humus
- Small bowl of wholegrain cereal or porridge with banana
- Small handful of whole or chopped plain (unsalted) nuts
- Yoghurt with chopped fruit (fresh or tinned in natural juices)
- Toasted teacake or crumpet
- Slice of granary or wholegrain toast with peanut butter
- Sandwich with egg and cress, or tuna and sweetcorn

Keep hydrated - aim for around 8-10 glasses of fluid throughout the day. Water is best but all fluids can count. Try keeping a fresh water bottle close by and topped up.

Need help or support with breastfeeding?

Always speak to your Midwife or Health Visitor first if you require help or support with breastfeeding.

Don't worry if you are finding things difficult there is support available across North Wales.

Look online for North Wales Breastfeeding information on Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board website.



Search for **“Betsi Cadwaladr Breastfeeding”** or scan the QR code your mobile.



Search for your North Wales Breastfeeding Peer Supporters, Facebook groups.

These are trained Peer Supporters (mothers who have been specially trained to provide support for other mums within their communities), local face to face groups for mums with new babies and local Facebook groups.



Search for **“Betsi Cadwaladr Breastfeeding friends”** or scan the QR code your mobile.

For further reading revisit your Bump, Baby and Beyond book.



To download the book, search for **“Bump, Baby Beyond”** or scan the QR code your mobile.

National Breastfeeding Helpline

You can talk to a trained Breastfeeding Counsellor 9:30 am - 9:30pm on the National Breastfeeding Helpline **0300 100 0212**. (Welsh language version is also available.)



Understanding your baby, Solihull Approach Online

To access the online course search for **“In our place”** and note access code **NWSOL**. (Course available for North Wales residents until November 2022)

Remember you are not alone!

There is lots of help and support available, so don't be afraid to ask!

The benefits of breastfeeding will last a lifetime for you and your baby.