



Kanchi Kamakoti
CHILDS Trust Hospital

The Nourishing Bond

An In-Depth Guide to Successful Breastfeeding



Breastfeeding is an essential component of infant care, offering unparalleled benefits for both the mother and the child. It is a natural process, but for many new mothers, especially those facing high-risk pregnancies, it can come with challenges and uncertainties. Statistics show that globally, **only 40% of infants under six months** are exclusively breastfed. Increasing this rate is crucial, as breastfeeding is one of the most effective ways to ensure child health and survival. By understanding the key aspects of breastfeeding, it can be ensured that the mother and the baby get off to a great start.

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During Pregnancy Preparing for Breastfeeding

During pregnancy, the to-be mother's body prepares itself for breastfeeding. By the fourth month, the breasts start producing colostrum, the first milk that will nourish her baby after birth. This early milk is crucial for the baby's immune system and helps to clear their digestive tract of meconium, which lowers the risk of jaundice.

How long should breastfeeding be done?

Experts recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, followed by continued breastfeeding along with appropriate complementary foods up to two years or beyond. The duration of breastfeeding can be influenced by the mother's and her baby's needs and preferences.

The First Hour

Initiating Breastfeeding

The first hour after birth is a critical time for initiating breastfeeding. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), early initiation of breastfeeding within the first hour of life **can reduce neonatal mortality by up to 20%**. Here are some steps to get things started



Breastfeed within the first hour

This helps to stimulate milk production and provides the baby with colostrum, rich in antibodies.



Feed only breastmilk

If the baby is not feeding directly from the breast, ask for a breast pump.



Skin-to-skin contact

Hold the baby skin-to-skin to comfort them and stimulate feeding instincts.



Rooming-in

Keep the baby in the room, day and night, to facilitate bonding and frequent feeding



Avoid pacifiers and bottles

This helps prevent nipple confusion and promotes effective breastfeeding.

Colostrum

The Baby's First Milk

Colostrum is the thick, yellowish milk produced during the first few days after birth. It is packed with nutrients and antibodies that are essential for the baby's health. If the baby is too sleepy or not feeding well, the mother may need to hand express colostrum.

Hand expression of colostrum

1

Wash both hands thoroughly

2

Use a clean container with a wide opening or a spoon to collect colostrum

3

Place fingers and thumb about one to two inches away from your nipple, press towards the ribs, squeeze gently, and collect the milk

4

Repeat the process: press, squeeze, relax

Hand expression is more effective than pumping for colostrum because it prevents wastage that can stick to pump parts. Seek help from a nurse or lactation consultant if needed.



Feeding Positions

How to Hold The Baby for Breastfeeding

Finding a comfortable feeding position is key to successful breastfeeding. Here are some positions to try

Laid-Back Hold



- ▶ Lay back with pillows supporting the back and neck.
- ▶ Place the baby face down between the breasts.
- ▶ Allow the baby to nuzzle, crawl, and latch naturally.
- ▶ Use a blanket to cover the baby's back if needed.

Cross-Cradle Hold



- ▶ Use a pillow to bring the baby up to breast level.
- ▶ Hold the baby tummy-to-tummy, with their nose aligned with the nipple.
- ▶ Support the baby's head with a hand at the base of their skull.
- ▶ Once latched, switch to a regular cradle hold.

Football Hold



- ▶ Place a pillow on the side.
- ▶ Position the baby on the pillow, with their legs under the arm.
- ▶ Support the baby's back with the arm and their head with a hand.

Side-Lying Hold



- ▶ Lie on the side with knees bent, supported by pillows.
- ▶ Place the baby on their side facing the nipple.
- ▶ Support the baby with an arm or a rolled-up blanket.

Comfortable Latch

How to Attach The Baby to The Breast

A proper latch ensures effective breastfeeding and prevents discomfort.
Here's how to achieve a good latch

▶ **Nose to Nipple**

Position the baby so that their nose is in line with the nipple. This encourages them to open their mouth wide.

▶ **Wide Open Mouth**

Wait for the baby to open their mouth wide before bringing them to the breast.

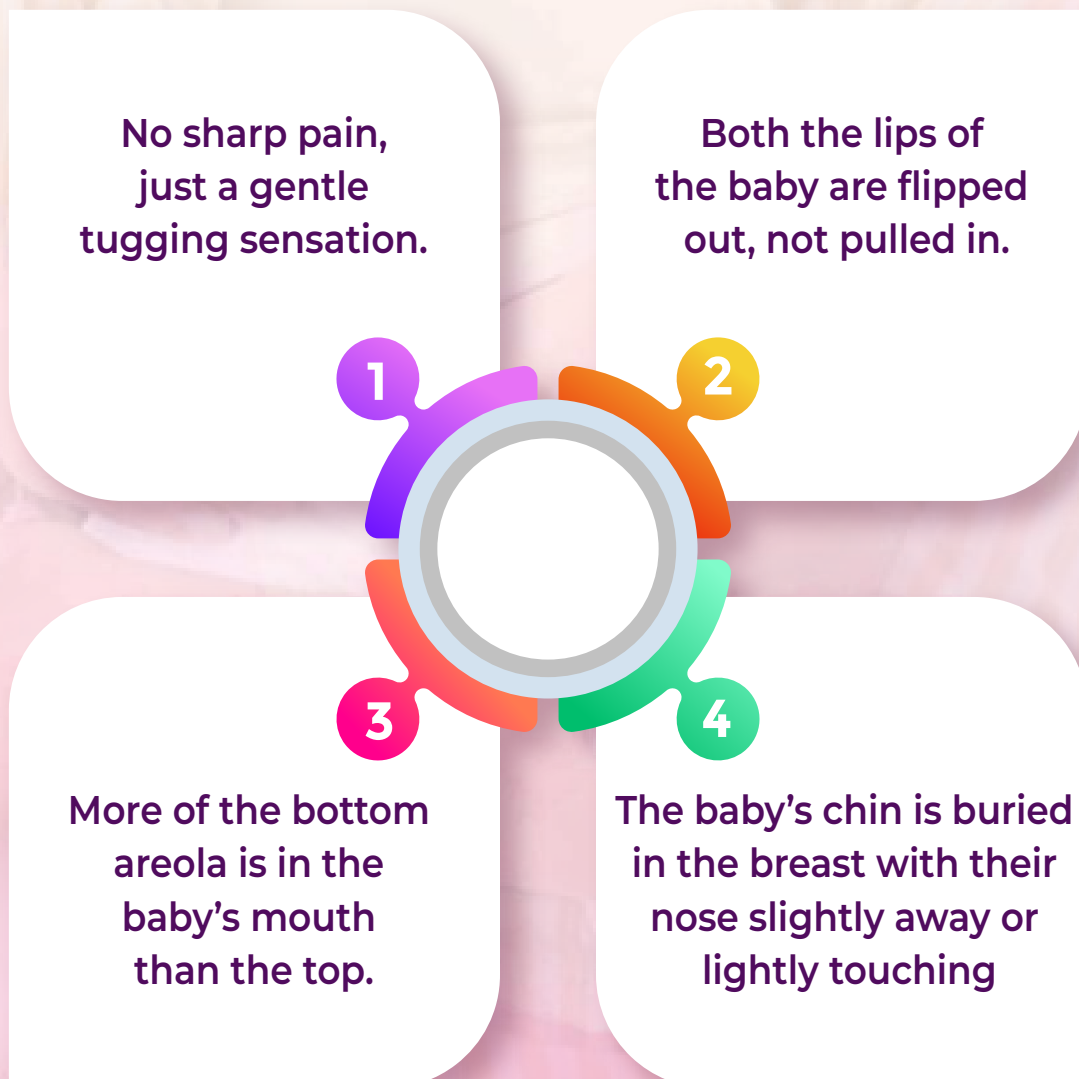
▶ **Chin and Cheeks Touching**

Ensure that the baby's chin and cheeks are touching the breast, creating a tight seal.

▶ **Adjust as Needed**

If there's pain or the baby seems frustrated, gently break the suction and try again.

Signs of a good latch include





Signs of Hunger and Fullness

How Often to Feed The Baby

Recognizing the baby's hunger and fullness cues is crucial for successful breastfeeding. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, **feeding the baby 8-12 times per day is normal in the first few weeks.**

Signs of Hunger

The baby is ready to feed if they

- ▶ Whimper or make sucking motions.
- ▶ Pull up their arms or legs towards their middle.
- ▶ Wake up and look alert.
- ▶ Move their hands or fists to their mouth.
- ▶ Nuzzle against the breast.

Signs of Fullness

The baby is likely full when they

- ▶ Let's go off the breast and nipple.
- ▶ Fall asleep and stop sucking.
- ▶ Relax their hands and body.

Room-sharing can help in recognising these cues more easily, fostering a better feeding routine.

Managing Sleepy Babies

How to Wake The Baby for Feeding

Sleepy babies may not show hunger signs clearly, making it essential to wake them for feeding.

Tips for Waking The Baby



Most sleepy babies will become more alert within a few days, improving their feeding cues.

Feeding Frequency

Encourage your sleepy baby to nurse at least 8-12 times in 24 hours, with no more than one four-hour sleep period.

Ensuring Adequate Nutrition

Monitoring Weight Gain

Monitoring your baby's weight gain is the best way to ensure they are getting enough to eat. Track their wet and poopy diapers as well.

Diaper Output

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a baby should have

- ▶ At least six wet diapers per day by the end of the first week.
- ▶ Three or more poopy diapers per day by the third day.

Weight Gain

Newborns often lose weight in the first few days but should regain their birth weight by day 10-14. After regaining birth weight, they should gain about 110 to 220 grams per week. Schedule a visit with the baby's doctor within 3-5 days of hospital discharge to ensure proper weight gain.

Reducing Swelling

Managing Engorgement

Engorgement occurs when the breasts become overly full, leading to discomfort.

Managing Engorgement

- ▶ Nurse the baby frequently to keep the breasts from becoming too full.
- ▶ Take a short, warm shower or use a warm, wet towel over the breasts and nipples for a minute or two before feeding to soften the breasts.
- ▶ Gently massage the breasts towards the nipples while breastfeeding.
- ▶ Use cold packs for up to 20 minutes between feedings if the fullness becomes uncomfortable.

If the breasts become too full to express milk, try softening methods or seek help from a lactation consultant.

Managing Common Breastfeeding Challenges

Breastfeeding can come with a variety of challenges, but many common issues can be managed with the right approach and support.

Sore Nipples

Causes

- ▶ Poor latch
- ▶ Incorrect positioning
- ▶ Thrush or other infections

Management

- ▶ Ensure a proper latch by positioning the baby correctly.
- ▶ Use lanolin cream or expressed breast milk to soothe nipples.
- ▶ Consult a lactation consultant if soreness persists.

Low Milk Supply

Causes

- ▶ Infrequent feeding
- ▶ Poor latch
- ▶ Stress or fatigue

Management

- ▶ Increase the frequency of breastfeeding or pumping sessions.
- ▶ Ensure that the baby is latching well and feeding effectively.
- ▶ Stay hydrated, eat well, and rest as much as possible.
- ▶ Consult a doctor or lactation consultant for personalised advice.

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Mastitis

Causes

- ▶ Blocked milk ducts
- ▶ Bacterial infection

Management

- ▶ Continue breastfeeding or pumping to keep the milk flowing.
- ▶ Apply warm compresses to the affected area.
- ▶ Massage the breast gently to relieve blockage.
- ▶ Seek medical treatment if symptoms persist or worsen.

Thrush

Causes

- ▶ Yeast infection

Management

- ▶ Both mother and baby need to be treated to prevent reinfection.
- ▶ Use antifungal medication as prescribed by a healthcare provider.
- ▶ Maintain good breast and nipple hygiene.

Tips For Successful Breastfeeding

When to Seek Help

Breastfeeding can be challenging, but with the right support, you can overcome difficulties.

When to Call The Baby's Doctor

Call the baby's doctor if they

- ▶ Do not regain their birth weight by two weeks of age.
- ▶ Have fewer than six wet diapers a day by day six.
- ▶ Have fewer than three poops a day by day three.
- ▶ Still have black poop on day four.
- ▶ Will not wake up to nurse at least eight times a day.
- ▶ Fall asleep or stop nursing right after attaching to your breast.

Taking Care of Yourself

- ▶ Rest whenever the baby sleeps.
- ▶ Keep snacks and drinks nearby each time when sitting down to nurse.
- ▶ Limit caffeine to no more than three drinks a day.
- ▶ Consult the doctor before taking any medications.

Seek help from a lactation consultant if persistent soreness is experienced or other breastfeeding issues occur.

Breastfeeding Support

Resources and Assistance at KKCTH

At KKCTH, we understand the complexities and challenges involved in breastfeeding, especially for mothers with high-risk pregnancies. Our dedicated team provides comprehensive support to ensure a smooth and successful breastfeeding journey.

KKCTH's Dedicated Facilities

Lactation Consultants

Our experienced lactation consultants are available to assist with any breastfeeding challenges. They offer one-on-one consultations, which help address issues like latching, milk supply, and breastfeeding positions.

Breastfeeding Clinics

Our breastfeeding clinics provide a supportive environment where one can receive personalised care and guidance. These clinics offer educational workshops, support groups, and resources to help you navigate your breastfeeding journey.

Breastfeeding Rooms

We offer comfortable and private breastfeeding rooms equipped for breastfeeding and expressing milk. These rooms provide a quiet and relaxed environment for the mother and the baby.

A Helping Hand in This New Journey

According to UNICEF, increasing breastfeeding to near-universal levels could prevent **823,000 child deaths and 20,000 maternal deaths each year**. Kanchi Kamakoti Childs Trust Hospital (KKCTH) is dedicated to ensuring that every mother's journey through breastfeeding is as smooth and fulfilling as possible. By offering expert advice, comprehensive care, and a supportive community, KKCTH stands as a beacon for mothers with high-risk pregnancies, ensuring that they and their babies receive the best start in life.

With the right knowledge and resources, breastfeeding can become one of the most rewarding experiences of a mother's life. Trust in one's body, their baby, and the support system at KKCTH can help new mothers embrace the journey that strengthens the bond between them and their child.



**Kanchi Kamakoti
CHILDS Trust Hospital**