

BREASTFEEDING



feed **suck** **newborn** **nourishment** **prevent** **the most common reason**
twins **alert** **most** **on request** **lonely** **afraid of something** **comfortable**
weigh **upright** **lean** **cradle (cradling position)** **lie**

Breastfeeding is the **feeding** of a **newborn** with milk from a woman's breast. Babies have a **sucking** reflex.

Very often breast milk is the best way how to get **nourishment**. Milk helps to **prevent** diseases and helps for better health. Experts are not sure about how long to breastfeed. The World Health Organization recommends a minimum of two years of breastfeeding and *exclusive breastfeeding* for the first six months of life. Other institutions recommend at least one year of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life. Exclusive breastfeeding is when a newborn gets no other food or drink and breast milk only.

Mixed breastfeeding means feeding breast milk and some baby food and/or water, depending on the age of the child. Usually the mother uses a bottle to transfer the food to the baby's mouth.

Feeding two children at the same time is called *tandem breastfeeding*. **The most common reason** for tandem breastfeeding is the birth of **twins**.

Breastfeeding longer than two years is called *extended breastfeeding*. Some women breastfeed a child until the age of 3 or more.

Early breastfeeding: in the first 30 minutes after birth the baby's suckling reflex is strongest, and the baby is more **alert** so it is the ideal time to start breastfeeding.

Time and place for breastfeeding: breastfeeding once in 2 or 3 hours helps to keep milk production. For **most** women 8 breastfeedings in 24 hours keep their milk production high. Newborn babies can feed more often than this: 10 to 12 breastfeedings in 24 hours. Feeding a baby **on request** means breastfeeding much more than the minimum. Babies usually ask for milk when they are hungry, sometimes when they feel **lonely** or are **afraid of something**.

Feeding and positioning

How long the breastfeeding is cannot be the same and at all times the breastfeeding mother should be **comfortable**.

- **Upright**: sitting position with the back straight and **leaning** back comfortably.
- **Mobile**: mother carries her baby in some baby carrier while breastfeeding
- **Horizontal**: good for night or for those who had a caesarean section
 - On her back: “feeding up hill”: baby lies stomach to stomach with the mother who is lying on her back; this is helpful for babies finding it difficult to feed
 - On her side: mother and baby lie on their sides
- **Hands and knees**: The mother is on all fours with the baby underneath her (not usually recommended)
- **Cradling positions**: “cradle hold” = baby is with its head in the woman's elbow horizontally across the abdomen “tummy to tummy”

Questions and answers:

- 1) In the text: how often and how long should women breastfeed?
- 2) Can you describe three types of breastfeeding (as in the text)?
- 3) What breastfeeding positions are there (as in the text)?
- 4) How early should we start with breastfeeding? Do you agree with the following?

*“We should wait with **weighing**, measuring and bathing until the first feeding is completed.”*

General discussion

- 1) Why is it good to breastfeed? Is it easy to learn? How can we learn to breastfeed?
- 2) What is the longest time women can breastfeed – is it limited?
- 3) Have opinions on breastfeeding changed anyhow in the 20th and 21st century?