An Introduction to Breastfeeding
Table of Contents

1. An Introduction to Breastfeeding
2. An Emotionally Beneficial Act
3. Tips and Tricks
4. How to Increase Breast Milk and Lactation
5. Breastfeeding Troubleshooting
6. Helpful Breastfeeding Products
7. Eating 101
8. Drinking Alcohol While Breastfeeding
9. Breastfeeding in Public
10. Transitioning to a Bottle
For new moms, it’s important to learn all about the act of breastfeeding before your little bundle of joy arrives. It’s not right for everyone, but there are definite benefits to breastfeeding – both emotionally and physically – for mother and child. Breast milk is loaded with antibodies and nutrients that boost your newborn’s immunity, aid digestion, promote brain development and more. But it’s not only valuable for the infant. It also makes the feeding process easier for mom, too. In addition, it burns calories and can lower a mother’s lifetime risk of developing breast or ovarian cancer and postmenopausal osteoporosis.
Breastfeeding provides a unique and organic connection between mom and child that cannot be duplicated. The skin-to-skin contact can be imitated through bottle feeding but is never truly the same. In addition, breastfeeding produces a special hormone called prolactin that elicits a certain calmness in mothers, which can be especially helpful for first-time moms when everything is so new.

Breastfeeding can bring a closeness between mom and child through skin-to-skin touch, eye contact and overall touch, which can set the tone for the kind of relationship you and your little one have.

It doesn’t matter how long you breastfeed for, whether it’s two months or six. One month of breastfeeding is better than none at all.
Getting the hang of breastfeeding takes time and patience. First, position yourself to get skin-to-skin contact with your little one. Next, tickle your baby’s lips and gently guide the baby’s mouth toward your nipple. Once your newborn makes full contact, he or she should latch on. Your infant’s mouth should completely cover your areola to get a good feeding. This is essential for your baby to get enough milk. If it doesn’t work the first time, keep trying. Once your baby is done, be sure to burp him or her. Lastly, offer your little one the other breast, though he or she may deny another feeding.
Fatigue can reduce your milk supply. With a new baby, lack of sleep is oftentimes inevitable, but it’s important to give yourself enough relaxation time. The same goes for stress. Taking care of a newborn is incredibly challenging, but too much pressure can hinder your let-down reflex, which releases milk into your milk ducts. One of the best ways you can take care of your baby is by taking care of yourself first. It’s also important to continuously fill your body with the right liquids. Dehydration can be one of the main causes of lack of milk.

The more your little one nurses, the more your body will adapt to how much milk is being made. Therefore, the best way to increase milk is to nurse your baby.

Head on over to Mom365 to learn more about increasing lactation.
Breastfeeding Troubleshooting

One of the biggest and most frustrating issues you may experience is your baby not latching on. If this is the case, try using your own hands to pump the milk out of your breast. That way, your child will be more aware of what is going on.

Keep in mind that breastfeeding works best with skin-to-skin contact. Have your little one wear only a diaper, and you may find more success. If your baby still won’t give, you may have to start feeding through a bottle or syringe until he or she gets the hang of it.

The most important thing to remember is to keep trying. Even if this is new for the two of you, eventually you’ll both get the hang of it.
There are plenty of products that can help make you more comfortable during the breastfeeding process, as well.

For instance, a nursing bra is a must. This is an undergarment that allows you to unhook one cup without taking the entire bra off so you can feed your newborn more easily. In addition, a bra pump can come in handy when you need to plan meals for your little one. Nursing covers are also great so you can feed your baby in public without anyone even realizing it.

A breast pump is helpful. This contraption allows you to maintain milk supply so your little one can be fed when you’re not around, available or able to.
When breastfeeding, anything you put into your body can be passed along to your infant. If you drink a large amount of caffeine, some of it can end up in your breast milk. The last thing you want is a cranky baby who can't fall asleep. Cut down or eliminate caffeine from your diet. In addition, if your family has a history of allergies, be careful not to eat any nuts before breastfeeding. It may be too early to tell if your newborn has any food allergies, but you should exercise caution just in case.

If you have specific questions about what to or what not to eat, ask your primary physician.

Head on over to Mom365 to learn more about foods to avoid and foods that will nourish.
Alcohol penetrates your breast milk the same way it does your bloodstream. A glass of wine or one beer won’t have long-term effects, but it can affect your little one’s sleeping and eating schedule. Additionally, large quantities of alcohol can inhibit your baby’s growth and development.

To be safe, limit alcohol consumption. If you do drink, wait about two hours before nursing your baby so your system has a chance to clear itself. If you do plan on drinking, there are other alternatives. For instance, you can use a breast pump to filter milk beforehand and refrigerate it for when your baby needs it. On the other hand, you can always supplement breast milk with formula for an evening.
Breastfeeding in Public

Most mothers have varying levels of comfort when it comes to nursing their little one with strangers around. That’s where nursing products, like blankets or swings that can give you the modesty you need to feel comfortable. In addition, some moms like to pump their milk before they head out for the day. That way, whenever their little one is hungry, they can still feed nutritious breast milk without having to do it right then and there.

It comes down to what you’re most comfortable doing. If breastfeeding in public isn’t your speed, a breast pump can come in handy. On the other hand, it’s your right to be able to feed your little one in public whenever necessary.
Choosing the right equipment, like bottles and nipples, can help you transition to a bottle. You may have to try a few options to find one your baby responds to. Watch your baby’s body and actions to see what he or she likes or dislikes.

Keep in mind that you might want to switch who feeds your little one. If your child recognizes your scent, he or she might decline a bottle. Have your partner or other family member give it a try. Lastly, remember that this may take time, and with a little patience, your baby will grow accustomed to a bottle. If you feel wary or emotionally torn about bottle feeding, don’t feel pressured to do so. Take your time with the transition.