



BREASTFEEDING FACTS



Why is breastfeeding so amazing?

The amount of breast milk you are able to produce has nothing to do with your breast size. A mum with small breasts can have just as much (or more!) milk-making tissue as a mum with large breasts.³

There are no specific foods you always need to avoid just because you are breastfeeding.¹

Breastfeeding lowers the risk of postpartum depression²

Adolescents and adults who were breastfed as babies are less likely to be overweight or obese²

Breastmilk is made in breasts directly from a mother's blood, not directly from the food she eats. ¹

Your breast milk is constantly changing to meet the needs of your growing baby. From month-to-month, throughout the week, day-to-day, and even throughout a single feeding.³

Milk production is determined by the amount of milk removed from the breast.¹

Breastfeeding reduces the risk of breast and ovarian cancer and type II diabetes²

Breastmilk contains antibodies which helps protect infants from childhood illnesses.²

Your brain releases the hormones prolactin and oxytocin during breastfeeding, which help you to bond with baby and ease those normal feelings of stress and anxiety.³

Your first milk (colostrum) contains special proteins that coat your baby's intestinal tract to protect from harmful bacteria right from the start³

Breastfeeding burns between 500-600 calories a day.³

¹ <https://www.laleche.org.uk/breastfeeding-and-a-mothers-diet-myths-and-facts/>

² <https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/breastfeeding/en/>

³ <https://www.medela.us/breastfeeding/articles/14-fascinating-facts-about-breastfeeding>

FACT

**Breastfeeding is
not always easy**

- Breastfeeding is not always easy and requires time and support.
- Babies are born with the reflex to look for their mother's breast. However, many mothers need practical support with positioning their baby for breastfeeding and making sure their baby is correctly attached to the breast.¹
- There are many different sources of support nationally and locally that you can reach out to if you feel you need support. Please see [pages 20-22](#) of this document for links to these sources.

¹UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/food-nutrition/14-myths-about-breastfeeding>

FACT

**Breastfeeding
should not be
uncomfortable**

- Much of the discomfort many women experience can be avoided with the right support.
- If a mother faces breastfeeding challenges like sore nipples, support from a lactation consultant or other skilled professional can help them overcome the issue.¹
- There are some conditions that may affect the comfort of your feeding, some of these include:
 - Mastitis
 - Blocked ducts
 - Engorgement
 - Tongue tie
- Please find more information on [pages 15-18](#) of this document.
- If you feel that you are experiencing any of these issues please reach out to your support groups to help you. See [pages 20-22](#) at the end of this document for links to these sources.

¹UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/food-nutrition/14-myths-about-breastfeeding>

FACT

**Almost all mothers
produce the right
amount of milk for
their babies**

- Breastmilk production is determined by:
 - How well the baby is latched on to the breast
 - The frequency of breastfeeding and how well the baby is removing milk with each feeding.
 - Breastmilk is digested quickly (usually in 1.5-2 hours)²
 - Breastfeeding requires a good support network including family and friends, even if it is only to make you a nice cup of tea and pass you the biscuits.
- It's important to note that the feel of the breast, the behaviour of your baby, the frequency of nursing, the sensation of let-down, or the amount you pump are not valid ways to determine if you have enough milk for your baby.²
- If you feel that you have a problem with your latch or you suspect there may be an issue it is important to reach out to your local support groups and speak to your health visitor (see [pages 20-22](#))

¹UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/food-nutrition/14-myths-about-breastfeeding>

² Kellymom: <https://kellymom.com/bf/got-milk/supply-worries/low-supply/>

FACT

**All Babies are different,
some are clingy, some
are not, no matter how
they are fed.**

- Breastfeeding provides not only the best nutrition for infants, but is also important for their developing brain.¹
- Breastfed babies are held a lot and because of this, breastfeeding has been shown to enhance bonding with their mother.¹
- Also, babies often need continuous contact with mum in order to feel secure. All these things are normal, and you cannot spoil your baby by meeting these needs.²
- Some babies will cluster feed in the early days, this is normal and does not mean your baby is clingy. For more information on frequency of feeding and cluster feeding see [page 16](#) for links to more information.

¹UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/food-nutrition/14-myths-about-breastfeeding>

² Kellymom: <https://kellymom.com/bf/got-milk/supply-worries/low-supply/>

FACT

**You can use
formula if you
want to breastfeed**

- Some mothers may decide to use formula alongside breastfeeding, it is important to seek unbiased information on formula and other products that replace breastmilk (see [page 20](#)).
- To keep breastmilk production going, continue offering the breast to your baby as often as possible. It can be useful for mothers to consult a lactation specialist or skilled professional to help with a plan that works best for them to continue breastfeeding. ¹

FACT

**It is OK to
Breastfeed when
you are sick and
taking medication**

- In most cases mothers can usually continue breastfeeding when they're sick.
- You need to make sure you get the right treatment, and to rest, eat and drink well.
- In many cases, the antibodies your body makes to treat your disease or illness will pass on to your baby, building his or her own defences.
- It's important to inform your doctor that you are breastfeeding when you need to take medication.
 - It might be necessary to take medications at a specific time or in a specific dosage, or to take an alternative formulation.
 - Please see the link on [page 18](#) to a the breastfeeding network drugs factsheet

FACT

**A breastfeeding
mother may feel
more hungry and
thirsty**

- Breastfeeding can use up more calories than usual and we may feel more hungry and thirsty.¹
- How many extra calories we need depends on
 - How much breastmilk we are producing (influenced by baby's age and whether breastfeeding is exclusive)
 - Percentage of body fat (including how much body fat we have laid down in pregnancy)
 - Body size
 - How active we are.
- It's a good idea to have a glass of water available while breastfeeding, but it's not necessary to drink more than you feel comfortable with, as it doesn't help to increase milk supply¹

¹LaLeche: <https://www.laleche.org.uk/breastfeeding-and-a-mothers-diet-myths-and-facts/>

FACT

**Some women may
need additional
vitamin D**

- Breastfeeding mothers who have adequate amounts of vitamin D in their bodies can successfully provide enough vitamin D for their nursing children through breastmilk.¹
- It is recommended that pregnant and nursing mothers obtain adequate vitamin D or supplement as necessary.¹
- The optimal way to get Vitamin D is through sunlight.² However in the months where exposure to sunlight is low (September to March) you may choose to take a vitamin D supplement¹

¹LaLeche: <https://www.laleche.org.uk/breastfeeding-and-a-mothers-diet-myths-and-facts>

² NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/>

FACT

**If you are vegan
you will be able to
breastfeed**

- The concept of an “ideal” diet can vary across different families, cultures, economic situations, religions, and also different seasons.
- Almost always, all over the world, even in situations of deprivation, mothers produce milk that helps their babies grow well.¹

¹LaLeche: <https://www.laleche.org.uk/breastfeeding-and-a-mothers-diet-myths-and-facts>

FACT

**Some foods can
change the taste of
breastmilk**

- In general, there is no need to change food habits, as long as you maintain a healthy diet.
- Strongly flavoured foods, such as garlic, chilli or soy sauce, may change the taste of breastmilk. It's possible that this can help a baby get used to the family diet before starting solids.¹

¹LaLeche: <https://www.laleche.org.uk/breastfeeding-and-a-mothers-diet-myths-and-facts>

FACT

**A mother can
exclusively
breastfeed
multiple babies**

- Mother's milk is especially important for multiples, who are often small at birth and need all the health benefits it provides.
- The more milk your babies take, the more your breasts will make. This is especially important in the first few weeks.
- Since mothers of multiples usually experience more breast development during pregnancy, mothers of twins can almost always produce enough milk for both babies, and triplets can also be totally breastfed¹
- If you feel you need feeding support if you are pregnant with multiples please see the links of [pages 20-22](#) for support groups.

¹LaLeche: <https://www.laleche.org.uk/twins/>

USEFUL RESOURCES

BREASTFEEDING LATCHING AND POSITIONING

- <https://kellymom.com/ages/newborn/bf-basics/latch-resources/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/breastfeeding-positioning-attachment/>
- <https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/learning-breastfeed/getting-good-latch>
- <https://www.laleche.org.uk/positioning-attachment/>
- <https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/positioning/>
- <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/breastfeeding-resources/positioning-and-attachment-video/>
- <https://www.medela.com/breastfeeding/mums-journey/breastfeeding-positions>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/baby/breastfeeding/how-to-breastfeed/breastfeeding-positions/>

BREASTFEEDING RESOURCES (I)

- Breastfeeding after caesarean birth
 - <https://www.laleche.org.uk/caesarean-birth-and-breastfeeding/>
 - <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/breastfeeding-after-a-caesarean-birth/>
- Frequency of feeding
 - <https://www.whattoexpect.com/first-year/breastfeeding/cluster-feeding/>
 - <https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/frequency-feeding-frequently-asked-questions-faqs/>
 - <https://www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/feeding/early-days/how-often-should-i-breastfeed-my-baby>
 - <https://kellymom.com/parenting/parenting-faq/fussy-evening/>
 - <https://www.all4birth.com/growth-spurts-cluster-feeding-whats-it-all-about/>

BREASTFEEDING RESOURCES (2)

- Mastitis
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mastitis/>
 - <https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/mastitis/>
 - <https://www.laleche.org.uk/mastitis/>
 - <https://www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/feeding/common-concerns/mastitis-symptoms-and-treatment>
 - <https://kellymom.com/bf/concerns/mother/mastitis/>
- Blocked ducts
 - <https://kellymom.com/bf/concerns/mother/mastitis/>
 - <https://www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/feeding/common-concerns/blocked-milk-ducts>
 - <https://www.verywellfamily.com/plugged-milk-ducts-causes-treatments-and-prevention-431586>

BREASTFEEDING RESOURCES (3)

- Engorged breasts
 - <https://www.laleche.org.uk/engorged-breasts-avoiding-and-treating/>
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/breast-pain-and-breastfeeding/>
 - <https://kellymom.com/bf/concerns/mother/engorgement/>
- Tongue Tie
 - <https://www.tongue-tie.org.uk/>
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tongue-tie/>
 - <https://www.laleche.org.uk/tongue-tie/>
- Medications and breastfeeding
 - <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/drugs-factsheets/>

BOTTLE FEEDING RESOURCES

- Bottle feeding
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/types-of-infant-formula/>
 - <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/bottle-feeding-resources/guide-to-bottle-feeding/>
 - <https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/parents-carers>

NATIONAL SUPPORT GROUPS

- Find a local IBCLC - <https://lcgb.org/find-an-ibclc/>
- Breastfeeding Network - <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/>
- NHS breastfeeding help and support - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/breastfeeding-help-support/>

NATIONAL HELPLINES

- National Breastfeeding Helpline 0300 100 0212
- Association of Breastfeeding Mothers 0300 330 5453
- La Leche League 0345 120 2918
- National Childbirth Trust (NCT) 0300 330 0700
- The Breastfeeding Network supporter line in Bengali and Sylheti: 0300 456 2421