

Breastfeeding 101

Choosing to breastfeed means choosing to give your baby one of the best things that they could have. It means a lifetime of benefits and is beneficial to you, as well. The AAP recommends breastfeeding for the first year, at least and WHO recommends breastfeeding for the first 2 years, at least. It's their minimum recommendations because you may choose to breastfeed for as little of a time or as long of a time as the two of you like. Some breastfeed for only a few weeks, months, or years. Some choose to wean their baby and some choose to let their baby decide when they're ready to wean (aka self-weaning). Some mothers exclusively pump, or only pump when they're away, or if you're fortunate you may not need to pump at all. Some struggle in the beginning and some get off to a simple start. The point is that breastfeeding is different for every mother and every child, even with a second or third child of yours. It's important that you understand this when discussing breastfeeding and problem solving, because what may have worked for mother, may not work for you. If you are really having trouble contact your local IBCLC or your local La Leche League Leader. Support is essential in this journey so you may want to join a La Leche League support group or a local breastfeeding support group.

Human Milk for Human Babies

Breast milk changes as your child grows,

- Colostrum - the first small amount of milk that has a yellow tint and is full antibodies to help establish baby's intestines and immune system for life outside of the womb.
- Transitional Milk (Early Milk) - This milk is simply the milk you supply when your milk "comes in" from about 4-10 days after delivery. It contains less protein than colostrum and starts to get a white tint to it.
- Mature Milk - This milk is the milk your baby will consume from this point until you stop breastfeeding.

In your early milk and mature milk there is what is referred to as "foremilk" and "hindmilk". Foremilk is lower in calories and lighter in color while hindmilk is full of calories and darker in color. You may hear about the importance of your baby receiving hindmilk which is why you do not want to feed on a schedule or force your baby to stop eating. If you notice green frothy diapers then your baby may be receiving too little hindmilk.

