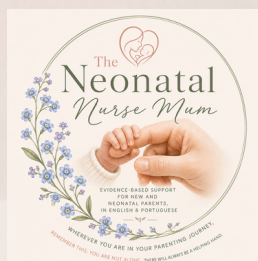


THE NEONATAL NURSE MUM



FEEDING YOUR NEWBORN

A GENTLE GUIDE TO FEEDING, CUES &
KNOWING WHAT TO EXPECT



CONTENTS

- 3* A LITTLE WELCOME
- 4* YOUR BABY'S FEEDING CUES
- 5* BREASTFEEDING
- 6* EXPRESSING BREAST MILK
- 7* BOTTLE FEEDING
- 8* HOW OFTEN & HOW MUCH?
- 9* IS MY BABY GETTING ENOUGH?
- 10* WIND, POSSETING & REFLUX
- 11* WHEN FEEDING FEELS DIFFICULT
- 12* WHEN TO ASK FOR HELP
- 13* FROM ONE MUM TO ANOTHER

A little welcome

Feeding your newborn can bring so many emotions — love, closeness, uncertainty, and sometimes a lot of questions.

Whether your baby is breastfed, bottle-fed, expressed breast milk, formula, or a combination, there is no single feeding journey that looks the same for every family.

This guide is here to help you understand your baby's cues, know what to expect, and feel a little more confident as you find what works for you and your baby.

Take what is helpful, ask for support when you need it, and remember — feeding is about more than milk. It's also a time for comfort, connection and getting to know one another.



A little reminder ❤️

You don't have to have feeding all figured out. You and your baby are learning together.

Your baby's feeding cues

Early cues

- OPENING THEIR MOUTH OR MOVING THEIR TONGUE
- BRINGING HANDS TOWARDS THEIR MOUTH
- TURNING THEIR HEAD AND SEARCHING/ROOTING
- BECOMING MORE AWAKE OR WRIGGLY

Active cues

MORE MOVEMENT, STRETCHING, HAND-TO-MOUTH MOVEMENTS AND INCREASINGLY OBVIOUS ROOTING.

Late cue - crying

CRYING IS OFTEN A LATE HUNGER CUE. IF YOUR BABY IS ALREADY UPSET, HELPING THEM SETTLE FIRST CAN MAKE FEEDING EASIER.

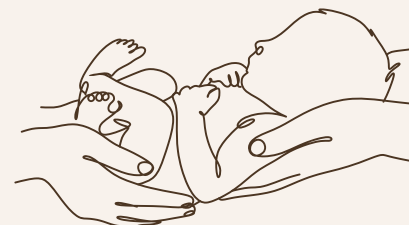


A nurse's note

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR BABY'S CUES TAKES TIME. YOU DON'T NEED TO RECOGNISE EVERY SIGNAL STRAIGHT AWAY — YOU AND YOUR BABY ARE LEARNING EACH OTHER.

Important

SOME SLEEPY OR UNWELL NEWBORNS MAY NOT RELIABLY SHOW FEEDING CUES AND MAY NEED TO BE WOKEN/OFFERED FEEDS ACCORDING TO AN INDIVIDUAL FEEDING PLAN.





Breastfeeding

Getting started

Skin-to-skin can help your baby feel calm and encourage their natural feeding instincts. When possible, offer the breast when you notice early feeding cues rather than waiting for crying.

A comfortable attachment

Your baby should take a good mouthful of the breast, not just the nipple. Their chin should be close to the breast, cheeks rounded, and you should be able to see or hear swallowing once your milk is flowing.

What can be normal

Newborns often feed frequently — sometimes very frequently. Cluster feeding, particularly in the evening, can be a normal part of establishing breastfeeding and does not automatically mean you aren't making enough milk.

A nurse's note

Breastfeeding is natural, but that doesn't mean it always comes naturally. It is a skill that you and your baby learn together. If breastfeeding is still painful, you're worried about attachment, or something simply doesn't feel right, ask for support.

Did you know?



In the first few days, your breasts produce colostrum — small amounts of concentrated milk specially suited to your newborn's needs.

Expressing Breast Milk

Why might I express?

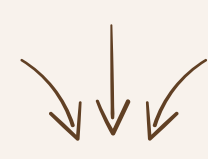
To stimulate or maintain your milk supply, provide breast milk when you are apart from your baby, or support feeding when your baby is not yet feeding effectively at the breast.

Hand expressing

Hand expressing can be particularly useful in the first few days when you are producing small amounts of colostrum. Your midwife, neonatal nurse or feeding team can show you how.

Using a breast pump

There are manual and electric pumps available. The right choice depends on why and how often you need to express. If you are expressing regularly or establishing your supply, ask your feeding team which type may suit you best.

- 
- ☆ Wash your hands before expressing
 - ☆ Make yourself comfortable
 - ☆ Skin-to-skin and being close to your baby may help with the flow
 - ☆ If expressing is painful, check your flange fit and suction level and ask for support if needed
 - ☆ Follow current guidance for safely storing and using expressed breast milk.



Bottle Feeding

Follow your baby's cues

Offer the bottle when your baby shows early feeding cues. Hold your baby close and allow them to take the teat into their mouth rather than pushing it in.



Try paced feeding

Hold your baby fairly upright and keep the bottle almost horizontal so the milk doesn't flow too quickly. Allow pauses during the feed and follow your baby's cues.

Let your baby decide when they're finished

Watch for signs that your baby needs a break or has had enough, such as slowing down, turning away, spilling milk from their mouth or no longer sucking. Never force your baby to finish a bottle.

A nurse's note

How much your baby takes from a bottle can vary from feed to feed. Responsive feeding means following your baby's cues rather than focusing only on the number of millilitres taken.

How often & how much?

HOW OFTEN?

Newborn babies usually feed frequently, day and night. Rather than watching the clock alone, get to know your baby's feeding cues and offer feeds responsively.

In the early weeks, 8-12 feeds in 24 hours is common for breastfed newborns.

HOW MUCH?

There isn't one amount that's right for every baby. How much your baby needs depends on factors including their age, weight, feeding method and individual needs.



SOME FEEDS WILL BE DIFFERENT

Your baby may take more at one feed and less at another. Breastfed babies may also have periods of very frequent feeding, known as cluster feeding.

FOLLOW YOUR BABY, NOT JUST THE CLOCK

Feeding is about more than numbers. Look at your baby's cues, overall feeding pattern, wet and dirty nappies, growth and how they seem between feeds.

A nurse's note 

If your baby was born prematurely, has been unwell or has an individual feeding plan, follow the advice from your neonatal or healthcare team rather than general feeding guidance.

Is my baby getting enough?

You can't always measure how much milk your baby takes, especially when breastfeeding. Instead, there are other signs that can help you know feeding is going well.

WET & DIRTY NAPPIES

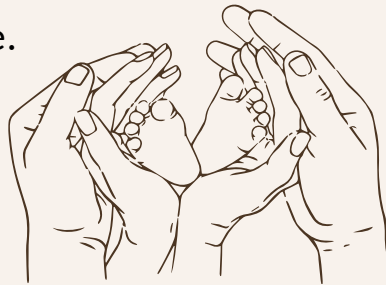
As the first few days pass, you should see your baby's wet nappies increase and their stools gradually change. Your midwife or healthcare team can help you know what to expect for your baby's age.

FEEDING & SWALLOWING

During an effective feed, you may notice rhythmic sucking and swallowing. Your baby's pattern may change throughout the feed, with natural pauses.

YOUR BABY'S BEHAVIOUR

Your baby should usually wake for feeds and have periods when they are alert. After some feeds, they may appear relaxed and content — although not every feed ends with a sleepy, settled baby.



WEIGHT & GROWTH

Some weight loss in the first few days after birth is expected. Your baby's weight will be monitored to make sure they are growing appropriately over time.

A nurse's note 

If you're worried that your baby isn't feeding well, is unusually sleepy or difficult to wake for feeds, or has fewer wet nappies than expected, ask your midwife, health visitor or healthcare team for advice.

Wind, Possetting & Reflux

WIND

Babies can swallow air during feeds. If your baby seems uncomfortable, you can pause during or after a feed and hold them upright to see if they need to bring up wind. Not every baby will burp after every feed — and that's okay.

POSSETING

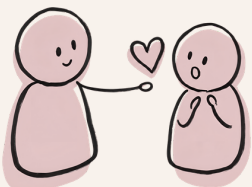
Bringing up small amounts of milk during or shortly after a feed is very common in young babies. This is often called possetting and, if your baby is otherwise well and growing, it is usually nothing to worry about.

REFLUX

Reflux happens when milk comes back up from your baby's stomach. Some babies bring milk up, while others may have reflux without obvious vomiting.

THINGS THAT MAY HELP

- KEEP BABY UPRIGHT FOR A LITTLE WHILE AFTER FEEDS
 - OFFER RESPONSIVE FEEDS
 - ALLOW PAUSES
- WIND YOUR BABY IF THEY SEEM UNCOMFORTABLE



*When to
ask for
help?*

If you're worried about your baby's vomiting or feeding, seek medical advice — particularly if the vomit is green, contains blood or is forceful/projectile, if your baby seems unwell, refuses feeds or isn't gaining weight as expected.

When feeding feels difficult

Feeding doesn't always go the way you imagined. It can take time for you and your baby to find what works, and needing support doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong.



It might look like...

- painful or stressful feeds
- difficulty attaching
- very long or very short feeds
- baby becoming unsettled or tired during feeds
- worries about your milk supply or how much your baby is taking

You don't have to work it out alone

If something doesn't feel right, ask for feeding support.

Sometimes a small change in positioning, attachment, teat flow or feeding technique can make a difference.

And remember...

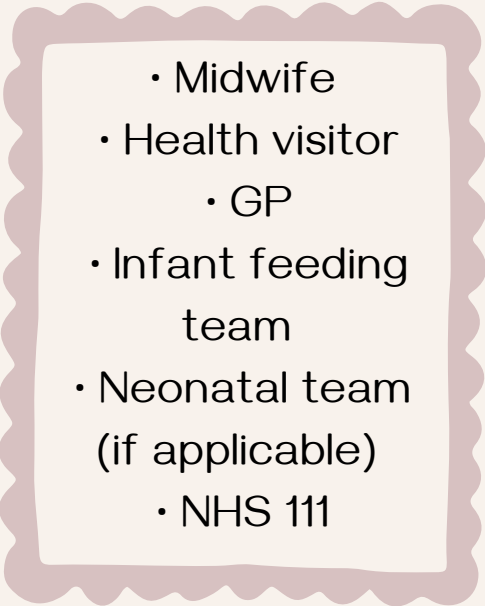
A feeding journey doesn't have to look a certain way to be a loving one.

When to ask for help

You know your baby best. If something doesn't feel right, it's always okay to ask for advice. Some feeding concerns should be assessed promptly.

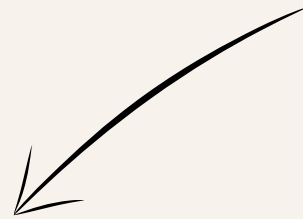
ASK FOR FEEDING SUPPORT IF

- feeding is consistently painful or difficult
- your baby struggles to attach or stay attached
- feeds are regularly very long, tiring or stressful
- you're worried about your milk supply
- you're unsure whether your baby is getting enough milk
- feeding simply doesn't feel right to you

- 
- Midwife
 - Health visitor
 - GP
 - Infant feeding team
 - Neonatal team (if applicable)
 - NHS 111

SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE PROMPTLY IF

- your baby is difficult to wake or unusually sleepy
- your baby is refusing feeds or feeding much less than usual
- there are fewer wet nappies than expected
- your baby seems unwell or you're concerned about dehydration
- your baby has green or bloody vomit, or repeated forceful/projectile vomiting
- you're concerned about your baby's weight or growth



You never need to wait until you're certain something is wrong before asking for help

From one mum to another

Feeding your baby can become such a big part of those early days.

It's easy to wonder whether you're doing enough, whether your baby is getting enough, or whether you're doing things the “right” way.

As a nurse, I can give you information and guidance.

But as a mum, I also want to remind you that feeding isn't just about ounces, millilitres, schedules or perfect feeds.

It's also the sleepy cuddles. The feeds that don't go to plan. The learning, the adjusting, and getting to know this little person who is getting to know you too.

Ask for help when you need it. Trust yourself when something doesn't feel right. And give yourself the same kindness you give your baby.

You are learning together.

With care,

The Neonatal Nurse Mum