

# UNICEF UK BABY FRIENDLY INITIATIVE GUIDE TO BREASTFEEDING



*This English language document is designed to be used in conjunction with our foreign language resources available at: [unicef.uk/babyfriendly-translations](https://www.unicef.uk/babyfriendly-translations)*

Congratulations on the birth of your baby. This infosheet will guide you through the basics of breastfeeding, including getting started and how to know your baby is getting enough milk. Breastfeeding will provide your baby with the best possible start in life. Breast milk gives them the best nutrition, supports their development and reduces their risk of illness and infection.

## After the birth

If you and your baby are well, it is important to hold your baby in skin-to-skin contact as soon as they are born. This means putting your baby naked (apart from a nappy) onto your chest. You will both be covered up with a blanket.

The contact will keep your baby warm, settle their breathing and heart rate and protect them from infection. Lying next to your skin will also encourage your baby to begin to look for your breast and start to feed. The first hour after

birth is a very special time for you and your baby to get to know each other, and by helping them have an early feed you will be switching on your milk supply. The small amounts of colostrum (a thick, yellowish fluid) produced in the first few days after birth are very beneficial for your baby as colostrum contains concentrated nutrients and protects your baby from infection.



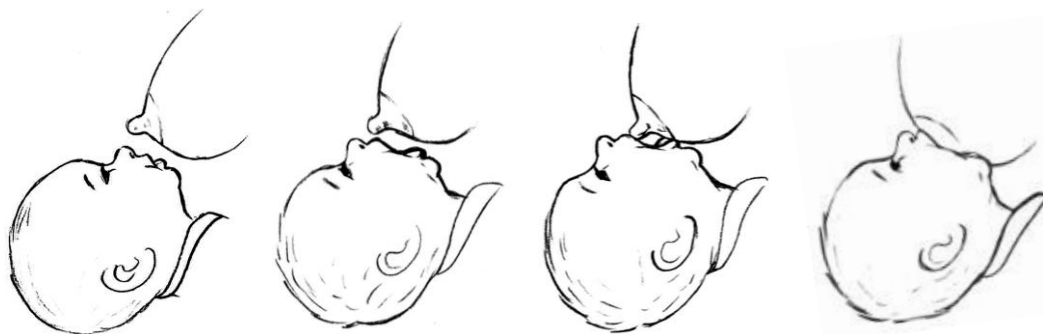
## The early days

Your baby may want to feed very frequently in the early days and weeks after the birth. This is normal as the more they feed, the more milk you will produce. It can take a little time for you and your baby to learn to breastfeed so the more opportunities you have to practise, the better. Keep your baby close so that you can look for signs that they might want to feed, such as sucking their fingers, opening their mouth and poking out their tongue. Try not to wait until your baby is crying for a feed as this will make it more difficult for you both.

## Holding your baby for breastfeeding

Here are some tips that can help you and your baby get breastfeeding off to a good start:

- Hold your baby close to you with their nose, tummy and toes in a line, facing your breast from underneath.
- Support your baby's neck rather than their head so that they can tilt their head back as they begin to feed.
- Gently rub your nipple in the space between your baby's top lip and nose to encourage them to open their mouth wide.
- Wait until your baby opens their mouth, pokes their tongue out slightly and tilts their head back, then gently bring them towards your breast, allowing your nipple to slip under the baby's top lip towards the roof of their mouth.
- You might feel a drawing sensation (this may or may not be painful) but this should stop within a minute or so. If pain continues, ask for help.



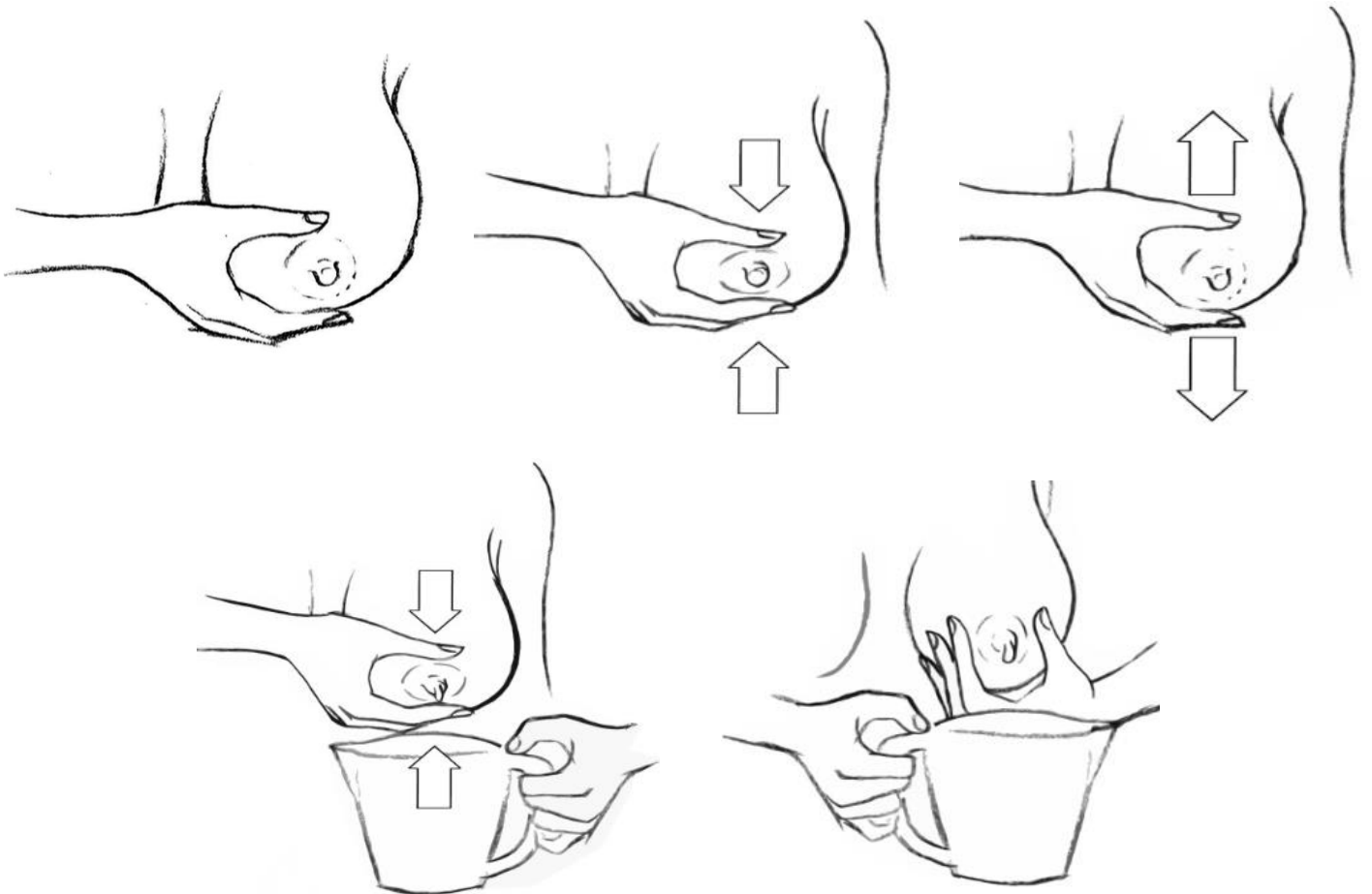
## Signs to show that your baby is getting enough milk

- Your baby will have a wide-open mouth.
- Your baby's cheeks will be full.
- Your baby will appear settled during the feed.
- You may hear your baby swallowing after every 2-3 sucks.
- Your nipple should be the same shape at the end of the feed with no pain or visible damage.
- Your baby will have a lot of wet nappies (between 6 and 8 after day 6) in 24 hours.
- Your baby will have at least 2 - but usually more - dirty nappies in 24 hours and their stool will change from black and sticky on day 1-2 to yellow and runny from day 4 onwards. **If your baby does not pass a stool for 24 hours, it is important to contact your midwife or health visitor.**

## Expressing your milk

Knowing how to express your milk to tempt your baby to feed is a useful skill, especially when they are a little sleepy or if your breasts feel full. This is a good video to show you how to do this: [unicef.uk/handexpression](http://unicef.uk/handexpression)

- Start by gently stroking and massaging your breast until you're relaxed.
- Make a 'C' shape with your thumb and forefinger.
- Gently move your thumb and forefinger back from the nipple, about 2-3cm.
- Press the area for a couple of seconds, then release and repeat.
- It can take some time for your milk to flow. Keep holding and releasing the same area until the flow reduces.
- Rotate round the breast and hold and release another area.
- Keep your thumb and forefinger opposite each other and avoid sliding them up and down the breast.



## Meeting your baby's needs

Your new baby will look to you for food, comfort and reassurance as they learn about the world. Holding, cuddling, talking to and responding to your baby helps them release hormones that support their brain development, and make them feel secure. New babies cannot be spoiled by responding to their needs and breastfed babies cannot be overfed, so

you can offer your breast for comfort as well as for food. Cuddling and feeding your baby also helps to keep you calm and allows you to sit, rest and enjoy your baby.

