



# Breastfeeding ... when you have not given birth

## Will I be able to breastfeed my baby?

It is possible to breastfeed a baby even if you have not been pregnant. This is called **induced lactation**. The regular, intimate touch and the calming, relaxing effect of breastfeeding can ease the transition from the birth mother to the new family. Children up to 3 years of age have successfully started breastfeeding from an adoptive mother. Some mothers are able to make enough milk for their babies. Some will need to give their babies extra milk as well as breastfeeding. You and your baby will still get the benefits of breastfeeding even though you may not produce all the milk your baby will need.

As soon as you know that you will be adding a new member to your family you can start to preparing to breastfeed. It does take more time and effort to build a milk supply when you have not been pregnant. You will need to learn how breastmilk is made how to build up your milk supply. A lactation consultant can help you.

Think about these questions and then talk with the lactation consultant:

- What are my goals for breastfeeding?
  - Can I do this in my situation?
  - Do I have enough support to do this?
  - Are there medical concerns that might affect my ability to breastfeed?
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## How do I get started?

If your main goal is bonding, you may choose to wait until your baby arrives. If you want to produce milk you may want to rent or buy a pump and start pumping 4 to 6 weeks before your baby arrives. A hospital-grade electric breast pump with a double kit is the best choice so you can pump both breasts at the same time. Pump your breasts at least 8 to 10 times a day, for about 15 minutes each time. Use your hands during and after pumping to remove all the milk you can. If you want to have a good milk supply, you may consider the induced lactation protocols at [www.asklenore.info](http://www.asklenore.info)

After your baby arrives, you need to know how to put your baby on the breast correctly. This is called the 'latch'. If you need more information or help, ask a lactation consultant or public health nurse.

**If your baby is less than 6 months old**, offer your baby the breast at least every 2 to 3 hours. Your baby may take the breast quite easily. Make sure that your baby latches on to the breast correctly. Ask for help early if you are not sure that your baby has a good latch.

**If your child is a toddler or preschooler**, you may need time to get to know each other before breastfeeding. Try offering the breast when your child is happy or sleepy. Sit with your child comfortably laying against your bare chest and let him or her take the lead.

If your baby is not yet ready to take the breast, you will need to remove the milk by hand or with a breast pump. Emptying your breasts will help your body make more milk. The more milk you remove by breastfeeding or expressing, the more milk your body will make.

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## Will breastfeeding be enough for my baby?

If your baby is younger than 6 months, you may need to give your baby extra milk (expressed breastmilk or formula) until your milk supply increases. Some mothers are not able to make all the milk that baby needs. They continue to give their babies extra milk until the baby is taking more solids at about 1 year of age.

The lactation consultant can help you learn the best way to give your baby the extra milk. You may learn to use a tube at the breast or feed from a cup.

Spend lots of time holding your baby skin to skin. Use a sling or baby carrier to keep your baby close during the day. Many women have had more success with induced lactation when using a cup or spoon to give the extra milk.

## How do I know my baby is getting enough milk?

### Check your baby's wet and dirty diapers

- Babies more than 5 days old should have 6 to 8 heavy, wet diapers and at least 3 yellow, seedy bowel movement (stools) a day.

### Have your baby's weight checked regularly

- Your baby's weight should be checked every week and more often if your doctor or lactation consultant feel it is necessary.

## What can I do to make breastfeeding as successful as possible?

Find people who will give you support. You may get help and support from a partner, friend or family member. You can also talk with a lactation consultant, the public health nurse, a La Leche League leader or your doctor.

Try to clear your schedule and get as much help at home as possible. Building a milk supply will take a lot of your time. Getting breastfeeding started may take 4 to 6 weeks.

Try to relax and enjoy your baby. Find a few minutes a day to do something that is soothing and relaxing.

You may need to take a herb or a medication to help your body make milk. Talk to your doctor, lactation consultant or pharmacist about your options.

Some herbs, birth control methods and other medications can stop or slow down milk production. Discuss this with your lactation consultant, doctor or pharmacist.

Give yourself some time. You and your baby are learning something new. This takes time, practice, patience and support from others. Soon you will find that you feel more confident about breastfeeding.

### Remember these 3 tips for success:

- ✓ Breastfeeding is much more than giving milk
- ✓ Focus on connecting with your child
- ✓ Follow your baby's lead

There are many people who can answer questions and help you build up your milk supply.



Some choices are:

-  a lactation consultant
-  a public health nurse
-  a La Leche League leader
-  your doctor or midwife