

BREASTFEEDING MYTHS

Reviewed: November 2024

MANY WOMEN DO NOT PRODUCE ENOUGH MILK.

NOT TRUE! Most women produce more than enough milk. Often, the baby may not get the enough milk due to a poor latch around the mother's nipple.

IT IS NORMAL FOR BREASTFEEDING TO HURT.

NOT TRUE! Though some tenderness during the first few days is common, it should be temporary. Breastfeeding should not be a dreaded experience. Any pain that is more than mild is abnormal and is almost always due to a poor latch or position.

THERE IS NO/NOT ENOUGH MILK DURING THE FIRST THREE OR FOUR DAYS AFTER BIRTH.

NOT TRUE! There is enough colostrum for the baby.



A BABY SHOULD BE FED ONLY ON THEIR "FAVORITE" SIDE.

NOT TRUE! Some babies may prefer their "favorite" side, but it is important to offer both breasts at each feeding. This is important to prevent engorgement or infection of the breasts.

A BREASTFEEDING SESSION WILL LAST EXACTLY 20 MINS ON EACH BREAST.

NOT TRUE! Your baby may feed for 10, 15, or 20mins, or more on each side. In the first 3 months your baby is on an "on-demand" schedule, meaning they should feed whenever they are hungry.

A BREASTFEEDING BABY NEEDS EXTRA WATER IN HOT WEATHER.

NOT TRUE! Breast milk contains all the water a baby needs. Babies younger than 6 months old, do not need water.

MOTHERS SHOULD WASH THEIR NIPPLES EACH TIME BEFORE FEEDING THE BABY.

NOT TRUE! Unless you have been using some cream or product on your breasts, you do not need to wash your nipples before each feeding. Unnecessary washing may remove protective oils from the nipple.

PUMPING IS A GOOD WAY OF KNOWING HOW MUCH MILK YOU HAVE.

NOT TRUE! Pumping only tells you how much you can pump.

BREAST MILK DOES NOT CONTAIN ENOUGH IRON FOR THE BABY'S NEEDS.

IT DEPENDS! Breast milk contains iron that covers most full-term babies' needs in the first 6 months of life. The best thing to do is to discuss with your baby's pediatrician if any supplements are recommended for them.

BREASTFEEDING IS VERY INCONVENIENT.

NOT TRUE! Often, breastfeeding requires much less preparation. A baby can breastfeed anywhere, anytime. No need to drag around bottles or formula. No need to worry about where to warm up the milk.

IF THE MOTHER HAS AN INFECTION, THEY SHOULD STOP BREASTFEEDING.

NOT TRUE! With very few exceptions and with the right precautions, breastfeeding can continue when the breastfeeding mother is sick.

MODERN FORMULAS ARE ALMOST THE SAME AS BREAST MILK.

NOT TRUE! Formulas can only mimic breast milk. Formulas do not contain a mother's unique antibodies, living cells, enzymes, or hormones. Formulas do not vary from the beginning of the feed to the end of the feed, or from day 1 to day 7 to day 30. Your breast milk adapts to your baby's changing needs.

IF THE BABY HAS DIARRHEA OR VOMITING, THE MOTHER SHOULD STOP BREASTFEEDING.

NOT TRUE! Breastfeeding while the baby is sick may speed their recovery and comfort them. The antibodies in the breast milk may also help the baby's immune system fight the infection.

IF THE MOTHER IS TAKING MEDICINE, SHE SHOULD NOT BREASTFEED.

NOT TRUE! There are very few medicines that a mother cannot take safely while breastfeeding. If you are breastfeeding, always talk to your provider about any medications or supplements you are taking.



LEARN MORE:

U.S. Department of Agriculture. Breastfeeding Basics.
<https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/breastfeeding-basics>

Office on Women's Health. Pumping and storing breastmilk.
<https://womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/pumping-and-storing-breastmilk>

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Breastfeeding Your Baby. <https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/breastfeeding-your-baby>