

Important Information about breastfeeding

Please read and keep safe for future reference

This information is available in other formats on request. Please ask your nursing staff to arrange this

Just like any new skill, breastfeeding takes time and practice to work well. In the first few days, you and your baby will be getting to know each other. Close contact and holding your baby skin to skin can really help with this.

Making milk

Each time your baby feeds, they are letting your body know how much milk it needs to produce. During the early days frequent feeds switch on milk-producing cells in your breasts. The earlier and more frequently your breasts are stimulated through touch and/or suckling the more milk cells are activated. This helps with long term milk production.

Feeding cues

Your baby will let you know when they want to feed by stirring, flickering their eyes, wriggling, rooting and sucking their fingers. Keeping your baby close will help you to recognise these early feeding cues. Feeding when your baby is just waking rather than waiting for crying makes it easier for both of you.

Responsive feeding

As well as feeding your baby because he or she is hungry, feeding responsively recognises that feeds are also for love, comfort and reassurance between you and your baby.

You may offer your breast if your baby is distressed, fractious, or appears lonely. Breastfeeding can help to settle your baby after a blood test, immunisation, if your baby is unwell or to reassure them in an unfamiliar environment.

You can also **offer your breast to meet your needs**, for example before you go out, before bedtime or because you just want to sit down, rest and have a cuddle.

Your baby cannot be overfed or ‘spoiled’ by ‘too much breastfeeding’.

Common questions

Is my baby feeding often enough?

In the first 24 hours it is common for babies to only have 3 or 4 feeds as they recover after birth. Keep your baby close and look for cues that your baby wants to feed.

After the first 24 hours your baby should be having *at least* 8 feeds in a 24hour period, however they often feed much more than this. This is all helping to switch on your milk producing cells.

Breastfeeds can be long or short and at varying times during the day and night. It is fine for your baby to have some longer sleep periods. If you are concerned that your baby is not feeding enough, undress your baby and place him or her in skin to skin contact. This can stimulate your baby to feed.

How do I know my baby is getting enough milk?

Your baby should be well attached to your breast and feeding should not be painful for you. After the first day or two you will hear your baby swallowing your milk.

Wet nappies

In the first 48 hours your baby is likely to have only two or three wet nappies. Wet nappies should then start to become more frequent with at least six heavy wet nappies each day from day five onwards

Stools (poos)

On the first day your baby will pass meconium, this is thick and black



By day 2- 3 stools should be changing to a lighter greenish colour



By day 4 stools should be yellow and your baby should pass at least two every day for the next few weeks.

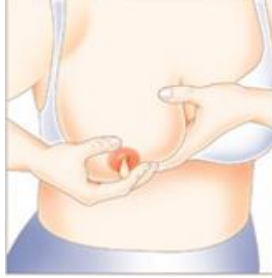


It is normal for babies to have lost weight when the community midwife weighs them around day 5. From then on they should start to gain weight. Most babies regain their birth weight in the first two weeks.

How do I hand express my milk?



Cup your breast and place your thumb and finger 2-3 cm from the base of your nipple



Using your thumb and the rest of your fingers in a C shape, gently squeeze this area

Release the pressure and then repeat again and again, building up a rhythm.

Avoid sliding your fingers.

When the flow slows, move your fingers round to try a different section of your breast and repeat.

When this happens again swap to the other breast

This may be helpful in the early days if your breasts are uncomfortably full or you want to express a little to encourage your baby to feed.

Breastfeeding support groups

There are several breastfeeding support groups in Harrogate and the surrounding area and also in Leeds and York. For specific details please ask your midwife or Health Visitor.

You are welcome to attend any of the groups for general support and to meet other parents. If you have any problems with feeding there is also specialist help available at all the groups or you can contact Jo Orgles, Infant Feeding Co-ordinator on 01423 555629

If your baby is not feeding and you are worried:

- Call your community midwife and ask for an urgent visit or advice.
- Out of hours, call NHS 111
- If you are really worried, take your baby to your nearest A&E or dial 999.

Maternity Services
Harrogate District Hospital,
01423 885959 www.hdft.nhs.uk
Version 1.1 Feb 2022