

# Feeding your baby

## The best start in life

Breastfeeding is the healthiest way for a mum to feed her baby with many health benefits for both mother and child. Breastfeeding isn't just about food - baby's immediate needs are to feel safe and secure, and to be able to feed whenever hungry. We encourage responsive feeding, which means recognising your baby's cues to feed, whenever and for as long as baby needs. Frequent feeding is normal. Exclusive breastfeeding is all your baby needs for the best start in life, babies need no food or drink other than breast milk for the first six months.

If your baby is formula fed, you will be shown how to do so while holding baby close with skin-to-skin contact.

To reduce the risk of infection, make up each formula feed as your baby needs it, using boiled water at a temperature of 70°C or above. This link will show you a step by step guide on how to do this -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/start4life-updated-guide-to-bottlefeeding/start4life-guide-to-bottle-feeding>

### Health visitor says

You can look out for the following signs that show your baby is getting enough milk for their needs:

- Your baby will be content and satisfied after most feeds.
- Your baby may lose weight in the first few days, but should be back to their birth weight by two weeks of age.
- Your baby should be happy and alert when they're awake.
- In the early weeks, your baby's nappies are a good sign of how much milk your baby is getting. From day 5 onwards, babies should have at least 6 wet nappies a day and 2 soft yellow stools a day. After around 4-6 weeks, breastfed babies might not have their bowels open every day.

Source: iHV.org.uk 2017

### Babies ask for feeds by:

- Moving their eyes.
- Wriggling, waving.
- Rooting.
- Sucking fists, blanket etc.
- Making murmuring noises.

Crying is a last resort, so try and feed your baby when they show the early cues above. They will feed better then.

1. Hold your baby's whole body close with their nose level with your nipple to help them attach correctly.

2. Let your baby's head tip back a little so that their top lip can brush against your nipple. This should help your baby to make a wide open mouth.

**3.** When your baby's mouth opens wide, **their chin is able to touch your breast first**, with their head tilted, so that their lower lip can make contact with the breast 2-3cm below the nipple.

**4.** With their chin firmly touching and their nose clear, their mouth is wide open and there will be much more of the darker skin visible above your baby's top lip than below their bottom lip. Your baby's cheeks will look full and rounded as they feed.

**Tongue-tie** can sometimes affect feeding, making it hard to attach properly to the breast. Speak to your health visitor.

If you require support for breastfeeding, you can contact your midwife, health visitor or community breastfeeding support. Walsall Healthcare host breastfeeding support groups across Walsall throughout the week, there will be one local to you, please see our website: [www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/breastfeeding/](http://www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/breastfeeding/)

### **Signs that your baby is feeding well**

- Your baby has a large mouthful of breast.
- Your baby's chin is firmly touching your breast.
- It doesn't hurt you when your baby feeds (although the first few sucks may feel strong).
- If you can see the dark skin around your nipple, you should see more dark skin above your baby's top lip than below your baby's bottom lip.
- Your baby's cheeks stay rounded during sucking.
- Your baby rhythmically takes long sucks and swallows (it is normal for your baby to pause from time to time).
- Your baby finishes the feed and comes off the breast on his or her own.