

Congratulations on your new baby!

We at Holyoke Pediatrics hope that you will choose nature's most perfect food and breastfeed your baby. Breastfeeding is important for your baby and for you for many reasons:

- ❖ Breastfeeding keeps your baby healthy – it protects your baby from diarrhea, constipation, pneumonia, ear infections and asthma. And even after you wean your baby, he/she is protected from diabetes, obesity and other serious problems as your baby grows up.
- ❖ Breastfeeding will help you get your body back to the same shape it was in before pregnancy, much faster than bottle feeding.
- ❖ Breastfeeding is a special bond between you and your baby.

While breastfeeding is easy, convenient and enjoyable in the long run, getting off to a good start can be challenging and requires just a little bit of knowledge. Here are some commonly asked questions and answers to help you through this time.

Q: Is breastfeeding my baby supposed to be this hard, exhausting and painful?

A: The first few days are always awkward, painful and very tiring. This is normal, but it gets much better! Keep feeding your baby whenever she/he is hungry. Soon things will get easier, less painful. Your baby will feed less frequently and you will feel confident in your new ability.

Q: Why is my baby losing weight?

A: All babies lose a significant amount of weight in the first few days. This is normal and not dangerous. Your breasts have colostrum in the first days. There is very little of it, but it is still important for your baby, as it is packed with immune protection to keep your newborn healthy. You will feel your milk come in at around your baby's 4th day of life. Then there will be plenty of milk and your baby will start gaining fast.

Q: My baby feeds all the time, does this mean I don't have enough milk?

A: No! Babies need to feed frequently in the beginning, both to encourage the milk to come in and to avoid engorgement (painful buildup in the breast). Sometimes the baby needs to "cluster feed" feed over and over in the same hour. This is all normal. After 1-2 weeks your baby will settle into a more regular pattern and want to feed about every 2 hours. Don't try to put your baby on a schedule, this will just be frustration for both of you, let your baby feed whenever he seems hungry. You don't even have to let him cry. Your baby will let you know he/she is hungry by stirring and moving his/her mouth. Allow the baby to finish one side, when he/she seems satisfied and relaxed, then switch to the other side.

Q: Is there a problem with doing both breast and bottle feeding?

A: Yes, a big problem! If you hope to breastfeed your baby, this will not work for you. The baby will soon go to the bottle only. Inconsistency in feeding confuses both your body and your baby. Your breasts will not make milk if they are not suckled on throughout the day and your baby will lose interest in suckling at the breast. This is also the case with pumping and giving the milk in bottles. The more bottles your baby gets, the more confused your baby will be at the breast. If you would like the breastfeeding to be successful, you need to just keep feeding your baby at the breast. If you feel you need to stop nursing because of pain or some other problem, let us know right away and we can help you with whatever problem you may have.

Breastfeeding facts you need to know

1. Your baby should be waking to feed once every 1-3 hours.
2. Your baby should be sucking contentedly and comfortably while nursing.
3. Your baby should seem content and drowsy after feeds.
4. Once your milk is in, your baby should have at least:
6-8 wet diapers/day
1-2 loose, seedy stools/day

If any of the above is not going well or if you have any questions, concerns, worries at all call Holyoke Pediatrics (413 536-2393).

Ask for: Lucy Garbus, Nurse Practitioner and Lactation Consultant
Bev Larkin, Nurse Practitioner
Leslie Johnson, Nurse Practitioner