



Feeding your **B**ab**y** in the early days: what you need to know

Part 1



衛生署

Department of Health



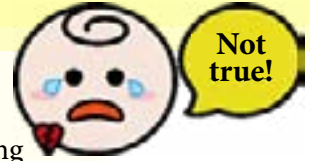
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1. The added ingredients in formula milk (such as probiotics) are as good as breastmilk for enhancing immunity and promoting your baby's health.



Breastfeeding:

-  Breastmilk contains unique natural antibodies, living cells, etc which strength your baby's resistance to diseases.
-  Breastmilk provides complete nutrition to promote growth.
-  Intimate contact between you and your baby during breastfeeding helps him feel secure, thereby enhancing mother-baby bonding and promotes development of your baby's brain.

Formula milk:

-  No natural antibodies, growth factors and living cells, which help fight diseases.
-  The added ingredients are meant to mimic the composition of breastmilk. There is not enough evidence to prove these added substances have long-term health benefits for your baby
-  Contamination is possible during manufacturing, storage and the transportation process.
-  Improper handling during preparation of formula milk can lead to bacteria growth which is a risk to your baby's health.

(Please read Chapter 1 of Love, Starts from Breastfeeding... for details.)



2. Breastfeeding may increase the physical burden on me.



It may but you can make adjustment to alleviate this.



Whether breastfed or formula-fed, your newborn baby needs to be fed frequently both day and night in the first month making you feel tired. However, when you breastfeed, a hormone is produced which has the effect of improving your sleep quality.



During this period, you can:



Sleep while your baby sleeps



Minimise guest visits in order to have more time to rest



Do less housework or ask others to help



From 1 month onwards, your baby may feed 7-8 times per day and sleep longer at night. At this point, you may get more time to rest.

(Please read Chapter 1 & 2 of Love, Starts from Breastfeeding... for details.)

3. You and your partner should have frequent intimate skin-to-skin contact with your baby regardless of whether she is breastfed or formula-fed.



You can place your naked baby on your uncovered chest shortly after birth.



Direct and intimate skin-to-skin contact can:



Provide your baby with emotional security and enhance mother-baby bonding



Provide your baby with warmth and stabilise her heartbeat and breathing



Help your body produce hormones that promote breastmilk secretion and uterine contractions



Both you and your partner can have more skin-to-skin contact with your baby especially before feeding, or when your baby is crying.

(Please read Chapters 1 and 2 of Love, Starts from Breastfeeding... for details.)

4. Breastfeeding is not suitable for mothers who have the following conditions: flat or inverted nipples, hepatitis B carriers, or suffering from flu.



There are only a few medical conditions that would make breastfeeding unsuitable.



Mothers with the above conditions can breastfeed their baby:



Having flat or inverted nipples: Apart from the nipple, the baby also takes in much of the areola during breastfeeding. Therefore, mothers with flat or inverted nipples can breastfeed their babies.



If you are a hepatitis B carrier: the baby will receive hepatitis B immunoglobulin and vaccine shortly after birth to prevent him from getting infected through the breastmilk. So it is safe to breastfeed.



If you have a cold or flu, the antibodies in your breastmilk can strengthen your baby's immunity. In general, commonly used medications for colds and flu are suitable for breastfeeding mothers.



Please seek advice from healthcare professionals if you have any questions.

(Please read Chapter 7 of Love, Starts from Breastfeeding... for details.)



5. Putting your baby to sleep in his cot next to your bed, helps you to respond to his needs in time.



Sharing a room with your baby and staying close can help you better understand your baby's need and respond promptly.



When you notice your baby's early cues of hunger, such as opening the mouth, or putting fingers into the mouth, you can start to feed him.



If you breastfeed your baby in a lying position, you should put him back in the cot after feeding so as to avoid accidents.

(Please read Chapter 2 of Love, Starts from Breastfeeding... for details.)

6. You should have feeding schedule and give fixed amounts each feed.



Every baby has own pace for feeding. Sometimes the baby needs to be fed more frequently, and sometimes sleeps more. Furthermore, the milk taken each feed may vary.



Baby should take the lead in feeding whether breastfed or formula-fed. Scheduled feeding and a set amount for each feed are not encouraged.



Start responsive feeding when you notice your baby's early feeding cues.



As long as your baby has enough wet diapers and bowel motions every day and has satisfactory weight gain, the milk taken is enough.

(Please read Chapters 2 and 4 of Love, Starts from Breastfeeding... for details.)

7. The amount of “first milk” (colostrum) produced in the first few days after delivery is small. I should feed my baby with formula milk first and only start breastfeeding after the breastmilk “comes-in.”



A healthy full-term baby is born with sufficient reserves of water and nutrients. The baby needs colostrum only in the first few days.



Benefits of colostrum:



The thick colostrum helps your baby to learn and coordinate her suckling, swallowing and breathing skills.



The small amount of colostrum matches the stomach size of your newborn baby which is the size of a marble.



Colostrum contains lots of antibodies and living cells that can be considered as your baby's first natural vaccination.



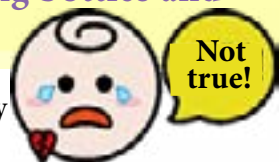
Feeding your baby formula milk will reduce her desire to suckle at your breasts and in turn affect your milk production.

(Please read Chapter 2 of Love, Starts from Breastfeeding... for details)

8. Giving my baby formula milk and water, using bottles and dummies will not affect breastfeeding.



Breastmilk is more than 80% water. Therefore, an exclusively breastfed baby does not need extra water intake.



Giving formula milk, water or glucose water to your baby as supplements:



Reduces your baby's desire to breastfeed and thus decreases milk production.



Reduces the effect of the “protective film” formed in the baby's gut produced by breastfeeding exclusively, hence increases the risk of infection and allergy.



Sucking at a bottle or dummy is completely different from suckling at the breast.



Introducing the bottle or a dummy to your baby before 1 month may affect learning to suckle at the breast correctly.



If expressed breastmilk or formula milk supplement is necessary, you may consider feeding the baby with a small spoon or cup.

(Please read Chapter1, 2 & 4 of Love, Starts from Breastfeeding... for details.)

9. The nutritional value of breastmilk reduces 6 months after my baby is born, so I can stop breastfeeding.



The World Health Organisation recommends breastfeeding exclusively during the first 6 months of the baby's life. When the baby is around 6 months old, solid foods should be gradually introduced and breastfeeding should continue up to 2 years old or above.



Not true!



Breastmilk contains a wide range of nutrients and your body can adjust the content according to your baby's needs at different developmental stages.



The chances of having food allergies will be lower if you start introducing new foods to your baby while still being breastfed.



Your baby's ability to produce antibodies starts to become more mature only on reaching the age of 2 to 3 years old. The natural antibodies, living cells and other factors in the breastmilk can reduce the risk of infections.



The longer you breastfeed, the greater the health benefits for both you and your baby.



Basically, there are no hard and fast rules. The best way is for you and your child to work out together when and how to wean .

(Please read Chapter 1 of Love, Starts from Breastfeeding... for details.)



We have included reference materials on infant feeding in the antenatal welcome package:



Love, Starts from Breastfeeding...
<http://s.fhs.gov.hk/ymavo>



You can ask your healthcare professionals for the booklet on “Guide to Bottle Feeding” <http://s.fhs.gov.hk/6tt2k> if needed.



Family Health Service

Website www.fhs.gov.hk

24-hour information hotline: 2112 9900