



### **Birth to 6 Months**

Babies, especially those under 6 months of age may feed very often (i.e. between 6 and 12 times a day from both breasts). They start off with very small stomachs that gradually stretch to accommodate bigger feeds. Feeding stimulates your breasts to make enough milk for your baby.

Breast milk is really easy to digest. This means fewer tummy aches, but it also means that your baby may be hungry again quite quickly. It is important to try and rest when your baby is sleeping.

Crying or unsettled behaviour can make parents feel concerned their baby is hungry. Babies cry to communicate their needs. Sometimes they are hungry, uncomfortable, they may need sleep, or they may just need comforting.

The following information can help you feel confident that your baby is getting enough milk.

# Key tips

## WET AND DIRTY NAPPIES

- The number of wet nappies increase after the milk 'comes in', expect at least 6–8 soaked cloth nappies or 4–5 heavy disposable nappies in 24 hours.
- Very young breastfed babies usually do several bowel motions (poos) a day. Even if your baby seems to be pushing hard, the poo is usually very soft. After a few weeks some breastfed babies only have a poo every few days or sometimes even longer than a week and it will still be soft.

## WEIGHT GAIN

- Your baby should gain weight after an initial weight loss and will regain their birth weight by around 2 weeks of age. In the first three months of your baby's life there is an average weight gain of around 150 grams per week. Some weeks babies have smaller gains, and other weeks they may have larger gains, as babies grow in spurts.

## CRYING

- Many babies can cry for up to 3 hours a day, or sometimes more, in the early weeks. Most babies like being held and comforted, but some babies still cry when they are being held. They cry when they are hungry or need to sleep or sometimes for no known reason.
- Babies sleep requirements vary. In the first few weeks after birth, babies sleep much of the day and night.
- Most wake 2 or 3 times during the night for feeds.
- Babies have shorter sleep cycles than adults and wake or stir about every 20-40 minutes.

## SLEEP

All babies are different. Between 3 to 6 months of age, some babies have 2 or 3 long sleeps during the day, while others just have short naps. A few sleep 12 hours at night without interruption, some manage 8 hours while many others wake fairly regularly for feeds. Most have learned to sleep more at night than they do during the day. Sleeping through the night or for long periods in the early days may indicate that your young baby is NOT getting enough milk. If your baby is lethargic or sleepy with feeds seek advice from a health professional or your doctor.

## REFERENCES

Australian Breastfeeding Association. (2005). *Breast and Nipple Care*, Australian Breastfeeding Association.

Brodribb, W. (2004). *Breastfeeding Management in Australia: Mothers Direct*

Riordan, J., & Wambach, K. (2010). *Breastfeeding and Human Lactation (4th ed.)*. London: Jones and Bartlett.

Parenting and Child Health. (2011). *Child and Youth Health*. Retrieved 19 October, 2011, from [www.cyh.com.au/SubDefault.aspx?p=98](http://www.cyh.com.au/SubDefault.aspx?p=98)

The Women's (2008). *Low Milk Supply*. Retrieved 19 October 2011, from [www.thewomens.org.au/Lowmilksupply?searchTerms\[\]=low&searchTerms\[\]=supply](http://www.thewomens.org.au/Lowmilksupply?searchTerms[]=low&searchTerms[]=supply)



## How can I find out more information

### 1. PHONE

**Maternal and Child Health service** by calling Community Health Intake (CHI) 6207 9977

**Pregnancy Birth & Baby** 1800 882 436

**Australian Breastfeeding Association**  
1800 Mum 2 Mum or 1800 686 268

### 2. ATTEND

#### 'Early Days' Group

(infants up to 3 months of age) for assessment and ongoing breastfeeding information and support.

**Contact Community Health Intake (CHI) for locations and times.**

### 3. VISIT

[www.health.act.gov.au/breastfeeding](http://www.health.act.gov.au/breastfeeding)

#### Accessibility

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like an alternative format, please phone 13 22 81.



If English is not your first language and you need the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), please call 13 14 50.

For further accessibility information, visit:  
[www.health.act.gov.au/accessibility](http://www.health.act.gov.au/accessibility)

[www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au) | Phone: 132281

© Australian Capital Territory, Canberra July 2018