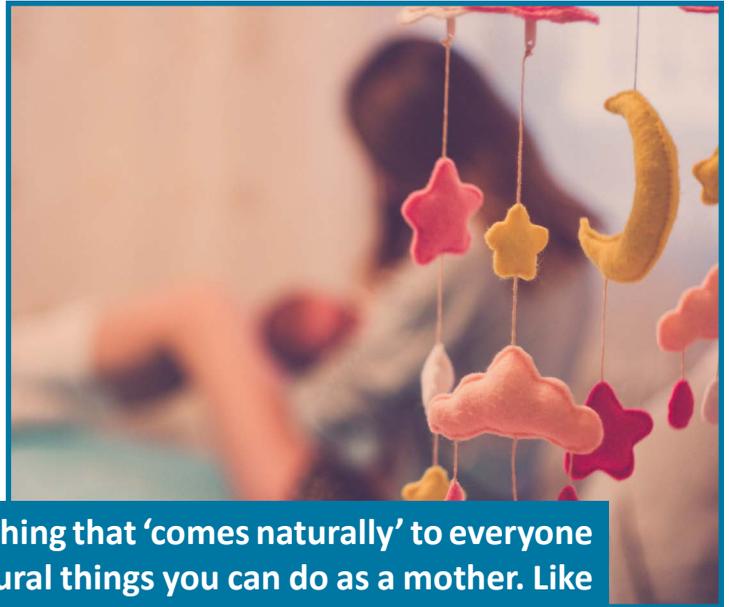


Breastfeeding your baby



Breastfeeding is not necessarily something that ‘comes naturally’ to everyone - even though it’s one of the most natural things you can do as a mother. Like any skill, nursing may need to be learned and even then, it can still be tricky.

When breastfeeding for the first time, many mothers are unsure whether they’re doing it right. You may be wondering whether you’re nursing your baby often enough or if they’re getting enough milk. Your doctor or a lactation consultant will offer the best advice on breastfeeding, but you can also keep these guidelines on hand to check that you’re doing it the right way.

How often should you breastfeed?

The more often you nurse your baby, the better. Frequent breastfeeding encourages a good milk supply and it reduces engorgement, which is when your breasts become painfully overfilled with milk. A good guideline is to feed your baby at least 10-12 times in 24 hours, or more often if your baby shows signs of hunger like stirring, placing their hands in their mouth, or rooting (when they turn their mouths towards anything that strokes their mouth or cheek). It’s recommended that all women breastfeed their babies for as long as possible – ideally for 6-12 months.

How to position your baby for effective breastfeeding

- To get your baby to latch on to your breast, sit comfortably and place your baby in your arms so that the baby’s head, shoulders, back, and knees are resting in your forearm. Your baby’s head should be resting near your bent elbow. Your baby should be lying so that he or she is tilted towards your breast.

- Hold on to your baby’s bottom or thigh with one hand.
- With the other hand, hold your breast with your thumb on top and your fingers underneath.
- Move your breast up and down so that it tickles your baby’s mouth.
- When your baby’s mouth opens wide, bring them onto your breast with a quick movement. For maximum effect, the baby’s mouth and gums should surround the entire areola, so that the nipple can stretch into the back of the mouth. The nipple should not be in a position where it can be damaged by the mouth and gums.
- As your baby sucks, milk is released or let down from the milk ducts and is squirted out from the nipple.
- Your baby uses different muscles to suck on a bottle teat. Avoid giving your baby milk from a bottle as this creates nipple confusion.

Problems during breastfeeding

Sensitive and tender breasts during breastfeeding are usually normal but, if you experience shooting pain between feedings and sensitive, pink nipples, you may be suffering from thrush. Overfull breasts may also cause pain and swelling, and can be prevented by frequently feeding your baby or hand-expression (using your hand to release milk from your breasts).

For more information, consult your doctor or your Employee Wellness Programme.