



Breastfeeding ... your older baby

In this factsheet we call the baby “he”. Other factsheets in this series use “she”.
We feel this is simpler than writing “he or she” every time.

Can I breastfeed my older baby?

Yes. Breastmilk and breastfeeding are important to your baby. Breastmilk continues to give him nutrients and protection against infection even when he is more than one year old. The World Health Organization and the Canadian Pediatric Society recommend that babies be breastfed for up to 2 years, in addition to other foods after 6 months of age.

Babies less than 6 months old need only breastmilk, no other food or drink. When your baby is older than 6 months of age he will need to start having other foods in addition to breastmilk.

What if my baby loses interest in breastfeeding?

Most babies between the age of 5 and 8 months become interested in the world around them. They may seem to lose interest in breastfeeding.

You do not have to wean your baby at this time.

Warm, close contact and feeding in a quiet spot will help. Try feeding your baby when he is quiet or sleepy.

Do I have to wean my baby when I go back to work or school?

Changes in your life, like going back to work or school will affect your breastfeeding. **This does not mean you have to stop breastfeeding.** You and your baby can still enjoy breastfeeding. You will need to make some changes that suit you and your baby.

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Some ways that mothers have continued to breastfeed are:

- having the baby close by and breastfeeding during breaks and meals
- pumping their breasts and letting the baby's caregiver feed the expressed milk
- breastfeeding the baby while they are at home and the baby has formula while they are at work or school

Can I breastfeed when I am pregnant?

Yes. In a healthy pregnancy, breastfeeding your older baby will not hurt your unborn baby. You may notice your nipples are tender and that you make less milk. The taste of your milk may change and some babies stop breastfeeding. Other babies do not mind and keep on breastfeeding.

If you are pregnant, continue to eat healthy foods and rest whenever you can. It may help to speak with your doctor, midwife or a dietitian to make sure you and your baby are getting enough nutrients.

It is possible that breastfeeding can cause contractions. If you feel any contractions while you are breastfeeding, stop and call your doctor or midwife.

Can I breastfeed my older baby after the new baby is born?

You can breastfeed your older baby when your new baby is born. This is called tandem nursing. It is important to meet the needs of your newborn first. Breastfeed your new baby 8 to 12 times a day.

Mothers who have breastfed two children at the same time can give you good ideas on how to do this.

You can call La Leche League or a lactation consultant for more help.



There are many people who can answer questions or help you with breastfeeding your older baby.

Some choices are:

- ☎ a lactation consultant
- ☎ a public health nurse
- ☎ a La Leche League leader
- ☎ your doctor or midwife