

# Breastfeeding

**Definition:** A natural and simple way to feed a baby.

**Types:**

- Exclusive: only breast milk
- Artificial: breast milk in a bottle.
- Full: both exclusive and artificial.
- Mixed: breast milk with animal milk in a bottle.

**Breast milk elements:**

- Protein
- CHO
- Fat
- Water
- Minerals
- Vitamins
- Immunological Substances
- Enzymes
- Hormones

**Stages of human milk:**

- Colostrum: 1 - 3 days postpartum
- Transitional: 3 - 5 days postpartum
- Mature: after 5 days postpartum

**Breastfeeding Preparation:**

- Wash hands
- Wash Nipples (with warm water, but not soap)

**Breastfeeding positions:**

- The Cradle Position: achieved by cradling the infant in one arm.
- The Lying Down Position: achieved by lying down on one side.
- The Football Hold Position: achieved by putting a pillow below the mother's arms and head, and a pillow below the infant's buttocks.

**Breastfeeding Method:**

- The mother hold her hand around her breast with the thumb on top behind the areola and the fingers against the chest wall.
- Both breasts are used: the first breast for 10 minutes and the other breast for 6 minutes; at the next feeding infants start to feed on the breast used to finish the preceding feeding this way to balance between foremilk and hindmilk.
- The neonate is nursed shortly after birth 1-2 hours and approximately every 2 or 3 hours thereafter.
- The infant should be burped after each breast and at the end of the feeding.

**Advantages of breastfeeding:**

- For the Baby:
  - Satisfies the infant's nutritional needs.
  - Gives greater immunity.
  - Digest easily, Fit the temperature, & Sterile.
  - Psychological bond between mother and baby.
  - Lowers allergic reactions.
- For the Mother:
  - Psychological relation between mother and baby.
  - Easy.
  - Decrease risk of breast, ovary and cervix cancer.
  - Decrease blood loss after labor.
  - Help the uterus return to usual size rapidly (involution).
- For the Family:
  - Economic.
  - Strengthen the relation between family members.

**Contraindications:**

- Mother related:
  - Mother with malignancy (Breast Ca)
  - Mother with cytotoxic or radioactive exposure

- Mother with psychosis
- Mother with a viral infection, or an untreated bacterial infection.
- Mother with areola/nipple lesion (mastitis)
- Baby related:
  - Inborn error of metabolism (e.g. Lactose Intolerance, Galactosemia)
  - Fetal Distress and Hypoxia
  - Breastfeeding Induced Jaundice
  - Congenital defect (e.g. Congenital Heart Defect)

**Important Notes regarding breastfeeding:**

- For low birth weight and small for dates: breastfeeding is important for growth and treatment of hypocalcemia.
- For post mature babies: breastfeeding is important for treatment of hypoglycemia.
- For immunized babies: immunization to the infant has no side effects.
- For Immunized mothers: immunization to the mother is contraindicated if immunised with live attenuated substance as Rubella or hepatitis vaccine.
- For mothers with multiple births: mother can feed them if she is well nourished.
- For Cesarean section Mothers: depend on type of anaesthesia (spinal or general) also according to the type of substance of anaesthesia; usually fed when she's alert or within the first 12 hours.
- For working mothers: this is not difficult if the mother prepare a place near her work and can feed her baby that time.

**Weaning:** a process of changing from one method of feeding to another, starting at 4 - 6 months of age, done gradually by introducing a new type of food.

**Common problems in postpartum period:**

- Sore nipple:
  - Caused by incorrect positioning.
  - Result in nipple damage and dermatitis.
- Cracked nipple:
  - Caused by abnormal positioning or excessive use of soap.

- Result in pain on nursing.
- Treated by application of lotion or mother's milk.
- Thrush (Yeast Infection)
  - Happens at any time.
  - Caused by antibiotics.
  - Associated with vaginal thrush in the mother, and an oral thrush in the baby.
  - Results in itchy, irritable, pink nipple.
  - Treated by antifungal cream on the nipple.
- Inverted Nipple
  - It does not prevent breastfeeding.
  - Treated by breast shells and exercising uterine contractions.
- Breast Engorgement:
  - Caused by not feeding for a long time or incorrect positioning.
  - Result in milk build up; hence a painful swollen breast.
  - Treated by frequent feeding, correct positioning, analgesia, and manually expressing milk.
- Mastitis (Red Inflamed Breast)
  - Caused by poor drainage or incorrect positioning
  - Result in red, hot, and tender breast; with fever and malaise.
  - Treated by equal nursing on both sides, with feed pumping on the affected side; with bed rest and antibiotics.
- Breast Abscess
  - Occurs as a complication of mastitis, or as a result of inadequate treatment.
  - Managed by rest, warm soaks and emptying of the breast; with antibiotics and surgical drainage.
- Blocked Duct (Milk Retention Cyst)
  - Felt as a smooth round-surface lump.
  - Treated by improving position and feeding on the same side of the lump.

*Edited by Baraa Abbas*