



## Breastfeeding your baby

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Breast milk is the best food for newborn babies.

The Public Health Agency of Canada, Health Canada and the World Health Organization recommend:

- breast milk only for feeding your baby from birth to 6 months
- continuing to breastfeed for up to 2 years or more after introducing solid foods

### Importance of breastfeeding

Breast milk has the perfect amount of protein, carbohydrate, fat, vitamins and minerals for a growing baby. It's the easiest milk for your baby to digest.

As your baby grows, your breast milk changes to meet your baby's needs.

Your breast milk contains antibodies and other immune factors that help protect your baby against infections and disease. This protection can last a lifetime.

Breastfeeding is also important for the mother's physical health. It can help protect against breast cancer, ovarian cancer and weak bones later in life.

And breastfeeding helps form a special emotional bond between you and your baby.

### 10 great reasons to breastfeed your baby



## Babies need vitamin D every day

All babies need vitamin D, which protects them from getting a bone disease called rickets.

To make sure your breastfed baby gets enough vitamin D, you can give them a vitamin D supplement of 10µg (400 IU) every day, beginning from birth.

Babies who are not breastfed do not need a vitamin D supplement because it's already added to commercial infant formula.

## Getting help with breastfeeding

Everybody needs a bit of help sometimes. It can take time for you and your baby to get used to breastfeeding.

Don't give up. It can sometimes take 6 weeks or more.

Breastfeeding is good for your baby and good for you.

There are many people that can offer help with breastfeeding. They understand what you're going through.

You can get help, advice, tips, and support for breastfeeding from:

- Your health care provider (midwife, doctor, or nurse)
- Your local public health services
- [Lactation consultants](#), who specialize in helping mothers and babies breastfeed
- Support groups like [La Leche League](#)
- Family and friends who have breastfed

## 10 valuable tips for successful breastfeeding



## **Smoking and breastfeeding**

You don't have to stop breastfeeding if you smoke.

Breastfeeding may help to lessen some of the negative effects that smoking may have on your baby.

[Find help to cut down on smoking or quit](#)

## **Alcohol and breastfeeding**

Avoid drinking alcohol if you are breastfeeding, especially when your baby is very young.

But you don't have to stop breastfeeding if you have a drink once in a while. An occasional small drink can be okay as long as you plan for it carefully. This resource can help you plan:

[Mixing alcohol and breastfeeding](#)

## **Breastfeeding when you're very sick or taking medicine**

If you are very sick or taking prescription medication, talk to your health care provider.

## **For more information**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/childhood-adolescence/stages-childhood/infancy-birth-two-years/breastfeeding-infant-nutrition.html>

- [Infant nutrition](#)
- [Canadian breastfeeding dashboard](#)
- [Breastfeeding resources for health professionals](#)