

Helping Babies Who are Reluctant to Feed

Babies who are reluctant to breast feed after birth are common. Most start breastfeeding in a day or so but some take a bit longer.

What Will Help

Lots of skin to skin time.

This encourages your baby's feeding cues

EARLY CUES - "I'm hungry"



• Stirring



• Mouth opening



• Turning head
• Seeking/rooting

MID CUES - "I'm really hungry"



• Stretching



• Increasing physical movement



• Hand to mouth

Try baby often at the breast to give lots of opportunity to practice feeding. Always get baby in a good position to make it easy to attach to your breast

- Head and body in line
- Nose to nipple
- Wait for a wide open mouth
- Quickly bring your baby onto the breast chin first
- Be very gentle if baby gets upset stop and try again later
- Giving some expressed milk first can calm baby then offer the breast
- Try putting some milk on your finger first to encourage your baby to suck

Trying a laid back position can really help

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A warm bath with baby may help if your partner is around to help.

Always be gentle with your baby and never try to force your baby to feed. If your baby gets upset stop and try again later.

While he is not feeding from the breast try to hand express or use an electric pump to stimulate your milk supply, express your milk at least 8 times in 24 hours and once at night. You can give your baby your expressed milk by cup or spoon as often as possible but at least 8 times in 24 hours.

Do not use syringes at home

Using a teat may cause confusion for your baby and make breastfeeding more difficult. Give him/her as much milk as you can express but as a guide for each feed

After 48 hours 5-7mls

By 72 hours 10 mls

By 96 hours 20-30 mls

By day 5 40-50 mls

After day 5 give as much as your baby will take but at least 50mls each time. If you cannot express enough milk speak to your midwife who will advise you.

You will know your baby is having enough milk by day 4 expect to have 6 wet nappies in 24 hours and 2 yellow stools.

How to Cup Feed

- Wrap your baby in a towel
- Sit baby upright on your lap
- Tip the cup so the milk is touching baby's lower lip
- and allow baby to lap the milk
- It is very important NOT to pour the milk into baby's mouth
- Your partner can help too



If you are concerned about your baby please contact your midwife the numbers will be given to you prior to discharge from hospital.

Infant Feeding Specialist Worcestershire Royal Hospital 01905 760507 (during the day)
Infant Feeding Specialist Alexandra Hospital 07879440264 - 07767440971 (during the day)
National Breastfeeding Helpline 0300 1000 212
NCT 0300 1000 210
BFN Supporterline 0300 1000 210