

Mystic Midwifery

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Immediately After Birth

Your baby can breast-crawl! Immediately after birth, your little human should be placed belly down, making direct contact with your bare skin. A blanket may be placed over the baby to keep warm. Decline anyone trying to take the baby away for arbitrary purposes unless in an emergency situation. With baby's feet touching your abdomen, allow your baby's instinctive responses to unfold as you watch the nine stages of the birth crawl: the birth cry, relaxation phase, awakening phase (activity), active phase (determined movements), crawling (pushing), resting phase, familiarization (brushing and licking after reaching areola), sucking and sleeping. For the first feed after birth, letting newborns experience the breast crawl is associated with fewer early feeding problems (Mohrbacher, 2020).

The First Hours After Birth

Spending time on the parents body (nude, skin to skin) is monumental in transitioning newborns into the world. Nursing ideally within the first hour after birth or as soon as possible for certain circumstances gives your baby a sense of security and sets the framework for less complications in nursing. Immediate skin-to-skin helps to regulate the baby's temperature, cardio-respiratory stability and glucose levels. Nursing within the first 1-2 hours after birth is linked to greater infant survival, earlier and increased milk production and less feeding problems (Mohrbacher, 2020).

Early Nursing Patterns

Initially, newborns may wish to nurse often, or seem disinterested in the breast/chest. A 24 hour bonding period where the newborn and parent do not separate and baby rests skin-to-skin as much as possible, is suggested for psychological and physical benefits for both parent and baby. Keeping baby on your body and offering the breast frequently can help to establish a parent-child nursing rhythm and ward off exaggerated newborn jaundice. But what exactly is a feed? When a newborn is attached to the breast and cheeks can be seen fluttering from suckling, the baby is most likely nursing. Nursing can last minutes to hours, and can be effective whether the baby is asleep, awake or lightly sleeping. The goal is to reach 8-12 feedings in the first day. Wet diapers are a crucial sign of feeding adequacy. Instead of fretting about nursing schedules, offer the baby your breast on-demand (or when hunger cues arise) for the first 40 days. Lastly, EXPECT babies to want to nurse intensely at night (most babies are born with their days and nights mixed up). Set-up for success by sleeping with the baby near to you like in a co-sleeper, nearby bassinet or by co-sleeping (if handled properly/safely).

Hunger Cues!

Nursing or offering the breast/chest before a newborn is crying is a great way to curb a parent-child diad dilemma. Early feeding cues can be increased alertness, physical activity, mouthing (putting hands to the mouth), and rooting (turning the head from side to side with an open mouth). Some consider crying to be a late indication of hunger; if a baby reaches the point of crying due to hunger, sometimes they need to be gently soothed before they will take the breast.

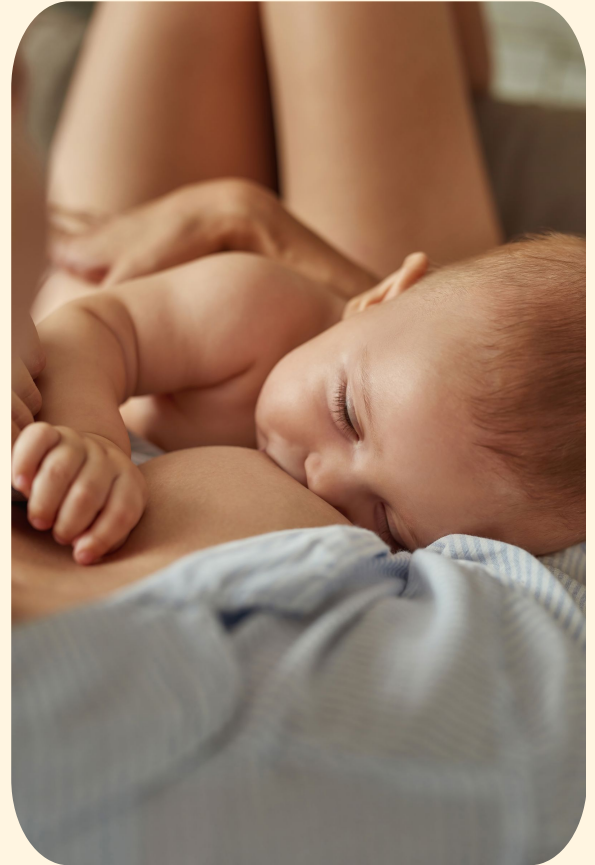
Mohrbacher, N. (2020) *Breastfeeding answers: A guide for helping families*. Nancy Mohrbacher Solutions, Inc. Baza Production. (n.d.) [Sweet baby falling asleep in mothers hands]. Shutterstock.

GETTING
BREASTFEEDING
OFF TO A GOOD
START!

Breathing Obstruction Safety

To ensure your infant's breathing is not obstructed, always maintain the ability to see your baby's face and remember these tips:

- Keep newborns chin raised in a "sniff position" and out of a chin-to-chest position
- When baby is resting tummy down on the parent the parent is semi-reclined, undistracted, and can visibly see a full view of the baby's face (nose and mouth)
- Neck is extended in a car seat instead of chin-to-



WHAT I TELL THE BIRTHING PARENT: *The first 40 days after birth is about bonding, healing, & establishing a connection rather than a routine. Feeding your baby and resting/recuperating are your primary responsibilities. Lying semi-reclined with baby on your chest is the "new parent's posture." Allow others to care for you, cook meals, and keep watch on the baby while you nap. Let others handle the chores and daily activities. Consider hiring a postpartum doula or housekeeper if you need help. Enjoy your initiation into the sacred contract of parenthood. -Sonni*