

At around 6 months of age your baby will start getting ready for solid food. Before this even, when they seem hungry, more breastmilk is all they need. Your baby needs to have the time to develop their gut and digestive system - breastmilk is perfect to help this happen. You can help by supporting mum and encouraging her to continue providing breastmilk.

## Where can we get help with feeding?

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, we are currently unable to run any breastfeeding support groups, however, there are virtual meetings happening with our colleagues, Bosom Buddies. You will be able to virtually drop in and receive peer support from other breastfeeding mothers. You can access them via their Facebook page: [Leeds Bosom Buddies](#).

For specialist support with breastfeeding please contact your 0-19 Specialist Public Health Nurse. You can also visit our website via the link below for further support and information:

[www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services-a-z/0-19-health-and-wellbeing/group-support/](http://www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services-a-z/0-19-health-and-wellbeing/group-support/)

For more information about the 0-19 Public Health Integrated Nursing Service please visit: [www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk](http://www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk)



You can also find us on Facebook:  
**0-19 Public Health Integrated Nursing Service**

## Help us get it right

If you have a complaint, concern, comment or compliment please let us know by speaking to a member of our staff. We learn from your feedback and use the information to improve and develop our services.

If you would like to talk to someone outside the service contact the **Patient Experience Team** on **0113 220 8585**, Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm or email [lch.pet@nhs.net](mailto:lch.pet@nhs.net)

**We can make this information available in Braille, large print, audio or other languages on request.**

# Partners and breastfeeding



0-19

Public Health Integrated  
Nursing Service



## Why is breast milk so important?

Breastmilk is made especially for your baby. Breastfeeding is the normal way to feed and comfort a baby and there are many practical and health benefits. Here are just a few:

- No need for equipment, less time consuming and it's free!
- Breastfeeding lowers the risk of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, asthma and leukaemia for the baby.
- Breastfeeding reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes and cancers such as breast, uterine and ovarian for mum.
- Even the smell of breastmilk can help reduce any pain the baby may have.
- Breastmilk changes to suit the growing needs of your baby meaning its tailor made for them and it is the best type of milk for your baby's tummy.
- The closeness and responsiveness of mums and babies when breastfeeding forms the basis for strong parent relationships. This helps support their emotional and mental wellbeing throughout life.

## How can partners help with breastfeeding?

You are different to your breastfeeding partner, with a different feel, sound and smell. You may think there's little for you to do in the first few weeks and months when a mum is breastfeeding, but there are plenty of other things to get involved with. You and your partner may both need time to adjust to your new roles. Here are a few things you can do that will ensure you are involved, and are both able to build a special relationship with your new baby.

- You can help by limiting visitors in the early days. This is a really important time for you to bond as a family and too many visitors can be tiring for baby and mum. Mum may also like some privacy and quiet time to ensure breastfeeding gets off to the best start.
- Protect mum from well-meaning but unhelpful advice - nearly everyone will have an opinion about how you feed and care for your baby! Seek out skilled help and support if needed rather than taking advice offered by others. Any issues can usually be fixed if help is sought early.
- Help to meet mum's (and any other children you have) needs for food and drinks - breastfeeding is thirsty work and uses energy.
- Night time feeding is really important for your baby. Just letting mum know you are there helps her know they're not alone on the breastfeeding journey.

- It can be easy to feel a little left out. Getting involved with practical things like bathing, playtimes and walks will help you bond with your baby. This will also help teach your baby that love comes from interaction as well as food.
- Offer encouragement and love to mum - praise her on doing such an amazing job feeding your baby.



Don't worry if you feel unsure of what to do - that's completely normal. Babies need attention for many different reasons: hunger, tiredness, loneliness, over stimulation and wind. Being there and responding to your baby is the most important thing.

## How can partners help baby develop?

Your baby will grow so much in the first few months of life, and they need your support to help their brains grow. There are millions of pathways in the brain which need connecting to help them develop and there are lots of things that partners can do to help with this.

Give your baby lots of cuddles. Hold your baby close and show them that they are safe in your arms. Even if you don't know what's wrong, knowing you are there is important for baby. It is important not to leave your baby to cry for long periods as this can impact on their growing brain. It also makes baby feel unsure of what to expect; sometimes babies don't know what's wrong and might just need some reassurance. Babies love the feeling of being skin to skin, so cuddling skin to skin or having a bath with your baby can be really relaxing for you both. Talking and singing, especially while looking in your babies eyes, supports your baby's brain development - the more words a baby hears the better!

Don't worry about getting it right all of the time - no one does! Being there and responding to your baby is the most important thing.

## Responding to your growing baby

All babies need feeding frequently, they have a lot of growing to do. By feeding frequently, your baby is getting all they need and at the same time letting mum know to make more milk. There might be times where it seems that your baby just wants to feed and feed - this can be really tiring for you all. You can help by looking after mum so she can look after baby, and joining in with some relaxing cuddles while they are feeding.