


# Talking Points in the First Week: Breastfeeding

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 Language should be tailored and participant centered. Use the parent's or participant's names whenever possible.

**Support:** Review comments/case notes to assess support before the call. Follow up on any relevant concerns from previous notes.

**Adjusting:** Bringing baby home from the hospital is an exciting time for families; it is also a time of adjustment. Moms need lots of rest to heal from childbirth and should try to nap when baby naps and when possible, limit visitors. Some parents find it helpful to have a list of tasks for others to help with, like folding laundry, washing dishes, running to the store, or making a meal, etc.

- Ask about who will be around in the first weeks to provide some of this extra support. If the family does not have extra support, ask if she would like to brainstorm ideas.

**Fussy Baby:** Babies have a strong need to be close. You can't hold your baby too much or "spoil" them. Cuddle and love your baby during feedings. Tips to help with a fussy baby:

- Feed on demand or frequently (8-12 times in 24 hours); this helps to calm the baby and reduce engorgement.
- Hold baby bare chest to bare chest (skin to skin). **Skin-to-skin** contact helps your baby recover from the process of birth and helps your body make more milk. Hearing your heartbeat and your voice can be a familiar and calming sound for baby.
- Have someone else hold/ rock the baby and do skin to skin (support person).

Often, baby is fussy on the **second night** after birth. Parents may think it's because the baby is not getting enough human milk, but really baby is more alert and aware of his new surroundings.

**Nighttime:** Parents often wonder when their baby will sleep through the night – the reality is that babies are not built to go through the night without eating. Nighttime feedings are needed for the baby to grow strong and healthy; they also help your breasts from becoming overly full. Babies feed at different intervals – some cluster feed in late evening and sleep longer at night, while others feed every 2-3 hours through the night. Feedings and sleep patterns balance out over time as both your bodies adjust to the baby's needs.

**Full breasts or engorgement:** Between days 2-5, nursing parents will experience changes in their breasts as the transition from colostrum to mature milk begins. Breasts become fuller as volume increases. Missing or delaying feedings can push your breasts past normal fullness to engorgement, making it harder for baby to latch. Tips for reducing engorgement or fullness:

- Before feeding baby, gently massage the breasts.
- Use hand expression to relieve enough pressure so baby can latch.
- Feed frequently or use a breast pump to remove enough milk to feel comfortable.


[How Much Can My New Baby Eat?](#) Newborns only need a small amount of human milk at each feeding. Your baby's stomach is no larger than the size of an egg at 7 days old.

- When learning, baby will want to eat more often - allow baby to feed as long as they want.
- Baby will tell you when they are hungry and full.
  - Some common hunger cues include:
    - Yawning, stretching, and waking up
    - Arms tense, hands in tight fists near mouth
    - Looking for the breast and opening their mouth wide
  - Signs that baby is well fed:
    - After feedings, baby has a relaxed body and sometimes they fall asleep
    - Most newborns will feed about 8-12 times in 24 hours (about every 1 ½ - 3 hours)
    - Your baby will have six or more wet diapers and at least three dirty diapers daily
    - Your baby will gain weight, starting around day 4.

"During the first week of delivery, some nursing parents want to talk about..."

- Use [Feeding Your Baby Birth – 12 months and Feeding Your Newborn](#) as a guide
- Use [HUG Your Baby](#) Roadmap as a guide
- [Got Enough Milk?](#)
- [Is My Baby Too Sleepy?](#)

# Talking Points in the First Week: Not Breastfeeding Anymore

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**Support:** Review comments/case notes to assess support before the call. Follow up on any relevant concerns from previous notes.

**What if the baby is no longer nursing?** “WIC is here to support you and answer any questions you have about feeding your baby.”

- Determine if they are interested in trying again to provide their milk, through pumping or latching. If so, provide support and resources for small steps they can take to get started again.
- If a parent is not interested in breast or chest feeding, respect their decision and offer support:
  - “During the first week of delivery, some nursing parents want to talk about...”
    - Use [Feeding Your Baby Birth – 12 months and Feeding Your Newborn](#) as a guide
    - Use [HUG Your Baby](#) Roadmap as a guide
    - Offer information on support, fussy baby, skin to skin, nighttime feedings, and full breasts adjusted from the talking points below.

**Adjusting:** Bringing baby home from the hospital is an exciting time for families; it is also a time of adjustment. Moms need lots of rest to heal from childbirth and should try to nap when baby naps and when possible, limit visitors. Some parents find it helpful to have a list of tasks for others to help with, like folding laundry, washing dishes, running to the store, or making a meal, etc.

- Ask about who will be around in the first weeks to provide some of this extra support. If the family does not have extra support, ask if she would like to brainstorm ideas.

**Full breasts or engorgement:** Between days 2-5, birthing parents will experience changes in their breasts as the volume of milk from colostrum to mature milk increases. This is an automatic process in the beginning, so even if a parent is not breastfeeding, the body will take time to adjust and reduce production. Tips for reducing breastmilk production:

- Use cold compresses on the breasts as often as comfortable to reduce swelling
- Hand express or pump milk just until comfortable to reduce fullness and pain from excess milk

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- Hold baby bare chest to bare chest (skin to skin). **Skin-to-skin** contact helps your baby recover from the process of birth and helps your body make more milk. Hearing your heartbeat and your voice can be a familiar and calming sound for baby.
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