



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

# Cooperative Extension

## Breastfeeding Fact Sheet

### *...and tips for back to work success!*

Reputable organizations including the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control (2019) recommend infants be exclusively breastfed through the first six months of life (American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP], 2012). Exclusive breastfeeding provides proper nutrition to promote optimal growth and development (AAP, 2012). Despite evidence supporting the benefits of breastfeeding for mother and child, only 1 in 4 US children are exclusively breastfed through 6 months<sup>2</sup>. Reasons for ending breastfeeding can vary, but common factors are return to work, breastfeeding difficulties, and perceived lack of milk. This fact sheet is intended to support breastfeeding through the first six months and beyond, by providing trustworthy, quick, and accurate information about breastfeeding and typical infant expectations for the breastfeeding mother planning on returning to work.



### Breastfeeding Basics

- **Production:** Breastmilk production works on a “supply and demand” system. The more milk that is expressed, the more milk the body will make. If exclusively breastfeeding, pumping or nursing 8-12 times daily will help protect milk supply (Seattle Children’s, 2020).
- **Engorgement:** When milk is not expressed for a length of time, the breasts become overly full

or engorged. Engorgement can lead to discomfort, plugged milk ducts, mastitis, or a decrease in milk supply (Mangesi & Dowswell, 2010). Prevent engorgement by frequently pumping or breastfeeding.

- **Pumping:** It is normal to express less milk when using a breast pump. After making sure the flange size fits comfortably, find a relaxing, quiet, and peaceful environment to pump. Consider using headphones to block office noise, watch videos or look at pictures of your baby, and use breast massage while pumping.
- **Supply:** It is very common to be concerned about having enough milk. A large percentage of women report an insufficient milk supply and stop breastfeeding or supplement with formula because they believe their baby is not satiated (Gatti, 2008). It is important to note that infants nurse frequently because they have very small stomachs and breastmilk is easily digested. Frequent nursing also helps establish the milk supply. Newborns commonly lose weight in the first few days of life (Bertini et al., 2014). After the newborn phase, weight gain and dirty diapers are good indications that the baby is getting adequate nutrition. If you are concerned about your supply and baby's growth, speak with your pediatrician, and consult a lactation consultant.
- **Milk:** Breastmilk can vary in color and smell due to diet. Color tinted milk is safe (La Leche League, 2020). Breastmilk will also vary in fat/water ratios, to meet the varying needs of your infant throughout the day and growth stage (La Leche League, 2020).
- **Nutrition for mother:** Well-nourished breastfeeding mothers may need an additional 450 to 500 nutrient rich calories per day (CDC, 2020). Your doctor may recommend taking a daily multivitamin. If you follow a vegetarian diet, your doctor might also recommend a daily vitamin B12 supplement (Mayo Clinic, 2020). It is important for mothers to stay hydrated and drink to thirst.
- **Nutrition for baby:** Your breastmilk is made specifically for your baby, meaning that breastmilk contains all the vitamins and nutrients the baby needs to grow for the first 4-6 months, and most of the nutrients beyond six months (Martin et al., 2016). Consult with your pediatrician about iron and Vitamin D supplements that may be recommended the first 4-6 months for the exclusively breastfed baby.

## Going Back to Work

- **Plan:** Where possible, discuss the details of your return to work prior to taking leave. Discuss where you might breastfeed/pump and create a schedule that accommodates lactation and your workload. Have ongoing discussions with supervisor and colleagues about needs, challenges, and support.
- **Transition:** Gently transition back to work. Returning to work on a Wednesday or Thursday may help ease into the new routine. Another option is to begin with partial days or working from home.

## Typical Baby Behaviors and Expectations

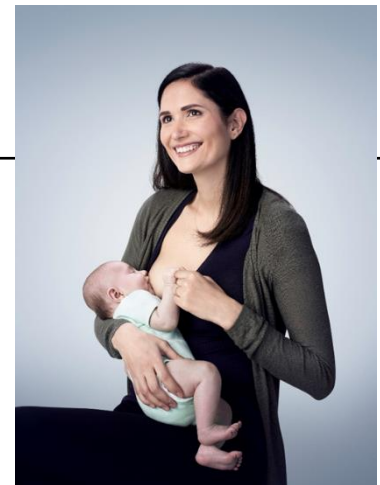
- **Bottles:** Some babies do not adjust well to the bottle, but they will make up the calorie and cuddle difference when reunited with their mother. This is called reverse cycle nursing and is a

normal infant feeding behavior (La Leche League, 2020).

- **Growth & Fussiness:** Growth spurts may result in increased feeding demands and fussiness. Growth spurts often occur at 3 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months, 9 months (Arizona Department of Health Services [ADHS], 2019). Babies may also nurse more or appear unsatisfied with normal feeding during teething, illness, and when regular routines are disrupted (ADHS, 2020).
- **Hunger:** Babies usually give cues when they are hungry, prior to crying. These cues could be mouthing their hands, making noises with their mouths, and rooting around, and have a tighter body (i.e, clenched fists) (ADHS, 2020).
- **Separation Anxiety:** Separation anxiety typically occurs around 5-9 months of age (Swanson, 2015). A consistent and quick transition will help the infant know what to expect. Being well-fed and rested at times of transition can also ease difficult goodbyes. With love and care in addition to regular routines, the baby will soon learn they are safe and that the parent will return (Swanson, 2015).

Choosing to initiate breastfeeding and deciding on the duration is a personal choice. There are many resources available to support a variety of breastfeeding goals. Utilizing this fact sheet and the below resources can equip breastfeeding mothers with the knowledge about basic breastfeeding, realistic expectations about infant behaviors, and planning ahead for transitions back to work.

Information and Resources



#### *National*

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Breastfeeding

- [www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding)

#### *State*

Arizona Department of Health Services

- [www.gobreastmilk.com](http://www.gobreastmilk.com)
- 24/7 Breastfeeding Hotline: 1-800-833-4642

For a comprehensive and regularly updated resource list *broken into regions*:

Arizona Breastfeeding Coalition: <http://azbreastfeeding.org/arizona-breastfeeding-resources>

Source: WIC Works Breastfeeding Support

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