

# Breastfeeding Works!



## *How to Meet the Needs of Breastfed Babies in Child Care*

**Massachusetts Department of Public Health**

Bureau of Family and Community Health

Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit

WIC Nutrition Program

*Max Care: Maximizing the Health and Safety of Children in  
Out-of-Home Care*

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# **Breastfed Babies in Child Care**

As a child care provider, you play an important role in helping mothers succeed in their decision to breastfeed. Creating a breastfeeding friendly program helps mothers to continue breastfeeding. This will benefit both you and your families. Breastfed babies become healthier children with healthier mothers.

**Breastfed babies are healthy babies...healthy babies are happy babies...and parents and child care providers with healthy, happy babies are less stressed!**

## **Breastfed babies are healthy babies!**

Breastfed babies have stronger immune systems. Breastfed babies tend to be at a lower risk for:

- ear infections
- colds and other illnesses
- asthma and allergies
- episodes of diarrhea and constipation
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- chronic conditions such as diabetes and obesity

## **Breastfed babies are less fussy!**

Breastmilk is more easily digested than formula. This translates to fewer episodes of spitting up, diarrhea, and fussiness.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians recommend exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continuing to breastfeed until at least 1 year of age, and then for as long as mutually desired.

There are many ways that you can help a mother to continue breastfeeding while her child is in your care. You can provide a clean, comfortable place for mothers who want to breastfeed in your child care program. When a mother can't come to your site to breastfeed, she may express (pump) her milk and then store it in the refrigerator or freezer for later use. You play a vital role in ensuring the safety of the stored breastmilk that is given to babies in your care.

## **Will a mother's milk supply decrease if she returns to work or school?**

A full supply of breastmilk can be maintained if a mother breastfeeds full-time when she is with her baby and pumps her breastmilk when they are separated. Her supply is directly related to the baby's demand.

## Welcoming Breastfed Babies to Your Program

Let current and prospective families know that you are willing to find ways to help breastfeeding mothers. There are several steps that you can take to ease a breastfeeding baby's transition into your child care program as a mother prepares to return to work or school.

- ◆ Invite the parents to bring the baby in for one or two short visits before returning to work or school. This helps the whole family get used to child care and it helps you get to know the baby.

- ◆ A baby needs to get used to bottle feeding before entering child care. For breastfed babies, this process should be delayed until they are about four weeks old. At this time, the introduction of a bottle is less likely to interfere with the establishment of breastfeeding skills. Parents should practice giving a bottle (a few per week to one per day) before the baby starts child care.

- ◆ Ask parents to write down an approximate feeding schedule. Also, ask them what to do in cases of emergency, such as when pick-up is delayed.

- ◆ Plan a baby's feedings so that they fit into the mother's schedule. For example, if the mother wants to nurse when she picks the child up, try not to feed the baby for 1 to 2 hours before she is due to arrive.

- ◆ Encourage a mother to breastfeed on site:

- *before leaving her child in your care*
- *during her lunch break (when possible)*
- *when she picks her child up from your program*

- ◆ Discourage or limit the use of pacifiers for breastfeeding babies. At first, they may delay the development of sucking skills. Later, they may contribute to the child eating less.

- ◆ Ask parents to bring breastmilk in labeled hard plastic bottles with a tight lid. Encourage parents to fill each bottle with the amount that the baby drinks in one feeding. If this cannot be done, pour enough breastmilk for only one feeding into a separate bottle and immediately put the rest back in the refrigerator.

- ◆ Ask the families of exclusively breastfed babies to provide you with enough frozen breastmilk for 1-2 additional feedings.



## Setting up a Breastfeeding Friendly Space

- ◆ Provide breastfeeding mothers with a clean, quiet place away from the hustle and bustle of activities.
- ◆ Offer mothers a comfortable chair with arms. You might also want to provide extra pillows.
- ◆ Make sure mothers know there is a place where they can wash their hands.
- ◆ Ensure a nearby electrical outlet in case mothers need to pump their breastmilk.

## Feeding Time: How to Handle Breastmilk

- ◆ Wash your hands before handling breastmilk or feeding a baby. Make sure that the bottles, nipples, and cups that you use are clean.
- ◆ When you prepare a bottle, use just enough breastmilk for a single feeding. Any breastmilk that a baby does not drink during a single feeding should be discarded.

Rule of Thumb:

- For younger infants, about 2-4 ounces per feeding.
- For older infants, 6-8 ounces per feeding.
- ◆ *Do not thaw frozen breastmilk at room temperature.* Instead, thaw frozen breastmilk by placing it in the refrigerator or running it under cool water. Once breastmilk has been thawed, do not refreeze it. Use thawed milk within 24 hours.
- ◆ Place refrigerated bottles in warm water for five minutes before you feed the baby.
- ◆ *Do not warm refrigerated bottles in boiling water.* If the water is too hot, some of the benefits of the breastmilk may be destroyed.
- ◆ **Never** use a microwave oven to warm bottles. This is dangerous for the baby because the milk is not heated evenly; this can lead to “hot spots” that can burn a baby’s mouth. The microwave can also destroy some of the vitamin C and immune components in the breastmilk.
- ◆ After you have warmed a bottle of breastmilk, gently swirl the bottle to mix the layers and test the temperature before you feed the baby.

## Guidelines for Using Stored Breastmilk

*The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association support the following storage guidelines:*

Refrigerated  
(< 40 degrees F)

Use within  
48 HOURS

Frozen  
(0 degrees F)

Use within  
3 MONTHS

Thawed  
(then refrigerated)

Use within  
24 HOURS

### The following procedures will help you to ensure that stored breastmilk is safe for the babies in your program:

- ◆ Advise parents to keep breastmilk cool during transport to the child care site. They can use a cooler with ice packs.
  - ◆ Only accept bottles labeled with a name and the date that the milk was expressed.
  - ◆ When parents arrive at child care with breastmilk, immediately refrigerate the bottle(s).
  - ◆ Keep thermometers in your refrigerator and freezer to ensure that they are at the temperatures listed in the above guidelines.
  - ◆ Check the dates and times on labeled bottles **daily**. Be sure that you are using the bottle with the oldest date first. *If the breastmilk is expired (according to the above guidelines) it must be discarded.*
  - ◆ After you remove breastmilk from the refrigerator, **never** let it sit at room temperature for more than one hour. If a bottle of breastmilk sits at room temperature for more than an hour, it should be thrown out because of the risk of bacterial growth.
- Never** refreeze thawed breastmilk.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How often should the baby be fed?**

Babies should be fed whenever they are hungry. Signs of hunger include turning the head, opening the mouth wide, sucking on the hands, and/or slight fussing. Crying is a late sign of hunger. Breastmilk digests more quickly than formula; so, breastfed babies usually eat more often than formula-fed babies do.

As a general rule of thumb, babies should be fed every 2-4 hours. Newborns and babies going through a growth spurt may eat more frequently. You should talk to parents about a baby's feeding schedule and the amounts that the baby should be fed so that you can accommodate each baby's individual needs.

### **How can I tell if the baby is getting enough breastmilk?**

During an 8-hour day at child care, you can expect most babies to eat about 3 times depending on the child's age. The amount of milk that breastfed infants drink from a bottle varies widely. Some babies will only drink small amounts (2-4 ounces at a time), and then nurse frequently in the evening when they are with their moms. Other babies may drink larger amounts.

Content and alert babies are probably getting enough breastmilk. If a baby is fussy you should talk to the parents and have them discuss the problem with their health care provider. If a baby acts listless and sick and has dark yellow urine and/or a dry mouth and lips, he or she may be dehydrated. A baby who is dehydrated needs immediate medical attention.

### **If a baby only drinks part of a bottle, is it okay to reuse the rest of the breastmilk later on?**

**No!** Once a baby starts feeding, the milk becomes contaminated. The baby's saliva creates an environment that can lead to bacterial growth. Any breastmilk that has not been consumed during a single feeding should be thrown away. To avoid wasting breastmilk, measure out small amounts at first. This can be increased as the baby's appetite grows.

### **Should water, formula, or solid foods be given to the baby?**

Babies should have only breastmilk or formula until about 4-6 months of age (unless indicated by a physician). At that time, you should get specific instructions from the parents regarding the age-appropriate introduction of solids and liquids.

### **The breastmilk has a layered look. Does this mean that it is spoiled?**

No, the breastmilk is not spoiled. When breastmilk sits for a while, the fat can separate out, giving it a layered appearance. Gently swirl the bottle to mix the layers that have separated.

### **What should I do if a baby is accidentally given the wrong bottle?**

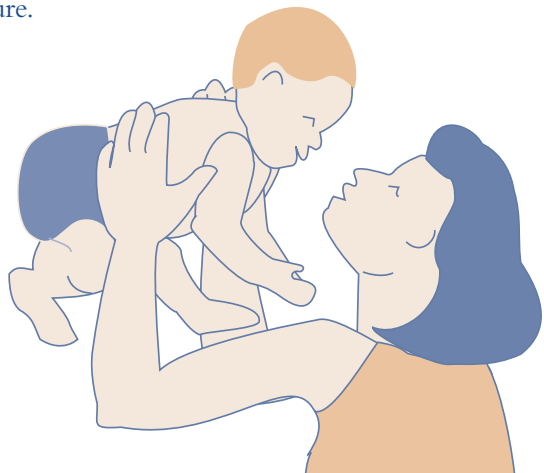
If a baby does get fed from the wrong bottle, inform both mothers immediately. To minimize the chances of having this type of accident occur, make sure that you have procedures that ensure proper labeling and storage of breastmilk.

### **Do I need to wear gloves to clean up spilled breast milk?**

Since the risk of infection to caregivers who are feeding expressed human milk is very low, wearing of gloves to feed or clean up spills of expressed breast milk is unnecessary. However, caregivers with open cuts on their hands should avoid direct contact with breast milk.

### **Where can I get more information about breastfeeding?**

You can speak with your child care health consultant. Other local resources include nutritionists, community health centers, and lactation consultants. You will also find some useful resources listed on the last page of this brochure.



## Resources

**Max Care Health Line**, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 800-487-1119

**WIC Nutrition Program**, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 800-942-1007

**Nursing Mothers Council**, 617-244-5102

**La Leche League**, 800-LA-LECHE

[www.lalecheleague.org](http://www.lalecheleague.org)

**National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health**,

703-524-7802, [www.ncemch.org](http://www.ncemch.org)

**Breastfed Babies Welcome Here!** United States Department of Agriculture,  
703-305-2746

**Caring for Our Children**, National Health and Safety Performance Standards,  
National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care, 800-598-KIDS,  
<http://nrc.uchsc.edu>

**Health and Safety in Child Care**, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 1995  
Available at the State House Bookstore, 617-727-2834

**Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition**, [www.massbfc.org](http://www.massbfc.org)

**Working and Breastfeeding**, National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition,  
703-836-6110, <http://www.hmhb.org>

**National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families**, [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

**Healthy Child Care America**, [www.healthychildcare.org](http://www.healthychildcare.org)

**Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Programs**,  
[www.fns.usds.gov/tn/resources/feeding-infants.pdf](http://www.fns.usds.gov/tn/resources/feeding-infants.pdf)

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