


# The 2 AM Breastfeeding Survival Guide

EVIDENCE-INFORMED REASSURANCE FOR THE FIRST WEEKS OF FEEDING



  
**YOU ARE DOING AN AMAZING JOB.**

Learning to breastfeed is a skill that you and your baby develop together.

If feeding feels difficult, you're not failing—and you don't have to figure it out alone. Reaching out for help is a sign of strength.








## It's normal to wonder if your baby is getting enough milk.

During the first days after birth, newborns typically breastfeed 8–12 times in 24 hours, often with irregular timing. Feeding based on early hunger cues rather than the clock supports breastfeeding.<sup>1</sup>

## 1 Look for feeding cues—not just crying.

Early feeding cues include:

-  Stirring during sleep
-  Bringing hands to the mouth
-  Rooting (turning toward touch near the mouth)
-  Opening the mouth and searching for the breast

 Crying is generally a late hunger cue. Feeding may be easier if started earlier.<sup>1</sup>

## 2 How often should my newborn nurse?



Many healthy newborns feed **8–12 or more times every 24 hours.**

It's also normal for feeding to occur in clusters rather than at perfectly spaced intervals.<sup>1</sup>

## 3 "I don't think I have enough milk."



Milk production increases with effective and frequent milk removal.

If your baby receives supplementation for a medical reason, the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine recommends expressing milk frequently—typically each time the baby receives a supplement—to help protect milk supply.<sup>2</sup>






## 4 Diapers: a helpful way to track intake



AGE	WET DIAPERS	STOOLS
Day 1	At least 1	At least 1 (meconium)
Day 2	At least 2	At least 2
Day 3	At least 3	At least 3
Day 4	At least 4	At least 3, yellow
Day 5+	6 or more	3 or more, yellow

 After day 5, expect 6 or more wet diapers and 3 or more yellow stools each day.<sup>3</sup>

## 5 Call your healthcare team promptly if:

-  Baby is difficult to wake for feeds.
-  Baby is not feeding effectively.
-  You notice fewer wet or dirty diapers than expected for age.
-  Your baby appears increasingly yellow (jaundice).
-  You have severe breast pain, fever, or flu-like symptoms.

  
 These situations deserve prompt assessment by your pediatric clinician and/or an IBCLC.<sup>2,4</sup>

## Helpful Reminders

  
 Comfort matters. Use pillows, bring baby close, and support your back.

  
 Hydrate and nourish yourself. You need water and calories to make milk.

  
 Rest when you can. Sleep supports milk supply.

  
 You don't have to do this alone. Ask for help and accept support.

  
 Every feeding is a chance to learn together.

### REFERENCES

1. Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. Protocol #37: Physiological Infant Care. *Breastfeed Med*. 2021;16(3):172-198.
2. Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. Protocol #3: Supplementary Feedings in the Healthy Term Breastfed Neonate. *Breastfeed Med*. 2017;12(2):188-198.
3. Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. Protocol #2: Hospital Discharge of the Breastfeeding Dyad. *Breastfeed Med*. 2022;17(6):435-441.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Jaundice and Breastfeeding*. <https://www.cdc.gov/immune/newborn/speru/immune-newborn-conditions/hq/19/0906/jaundice.html>. Accessed May 2024.