

# The first 10 days of breast/chest feeding

What might happen? Tips to help



## Day 1

Your baby will feed after birth and will then sleep; this is the time you can try to rest too. In the first 24 hours babies have **at least four feeds of colostrum**. This is first milk, which is small in quantity but high in nutrition and antibodies; it helps their digestive system get started.

Feed them whenever they show early feeding cues, or when you wish. This is the start of the two-way relationship of responsive breast/chest feeding.

**Tip:** Think about how you will cope with lack of sleep over the next few weeks. Try listening to podcasts, chatting to other parents online, going to bed earlier than usual and asking a partner or family member to care for baby whilst you sleep the next morning. For safety information The Lullaby Trust has advice around caring for your baby at night: <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/>



## Day 2

Once baby is 24 hours old, they now need to feed **at least 8-12 times in 24 hours**, including overnight.. This is the infamous night when babies stay awake and feed, feed, feed (known as cluster feeding). This is normal as they are 'putting their order in' for the milk they need in the future. They also seek the breast/chest for comfort (which is also normal) as they are awake to their new world; they feel happier when they're close to you.

Try to nap or rest in the day leading up to this night. It's also a good idea to have snacks and drinks available for night two.

**Tip:** At Sherwood Forest Hospitals, babies stay with their birthing parent 24 hours a day. Our ward team can support with hands off position and attachment, hand expression, pumping, and syringe and cup feeding. We also have the 2am Club where breast/chest feeding parents are encouraged to come out to the ward feeding room for a hot drink and a change of scenery.

## Day 3

You may start to feel your breasts/chest change as your milk 'comes in' (this can be delayed after some types of birth or parental conditions). You may need to hand express for a couple of minutes before a feed, to soften your breasts/chest so baby is able to latch on. It's important to keep your milk flowing – eat and drink according to your appetite/thirst. Your baby should now have three or more wet nappies and at least two changing stools in 24 hours. Urates (brick dust) should NOT be present – contact your midwife if baby has this in their nappy after day two.

**Tip:** If you are having any feeding issues ask for support from your midwife or the Lime Green Feeding Team once you are home.

You can also call Sherwood Birthing Unit on **01623 672244**.

## Day 4

You might feel emotional around this time due to hormonal changes. Talk to your partner, friends or your midwife. If you're also finding breast/chest feeding challenging, you can request support from our teams, and find videos on positioning and attachment on the Infant Feeding page on the Sherwood Forest Hospitals' website.

**Tip:** Make contact with your local breast/chest feeding peer support group to talk to other parents who have breast/chest fed or are currently breast/chest feeding their children (even if you don't have issues it's helpful to know other parents).



## Day 5

Today is the day your baby can be weighed by your midwife; it's normal for breast/ chest fed babies to lose up to 8% of their birth weight. Your baby will have at least five or more heavy, wet nappies in 24 hours and at least two stools in 24 hours (at least £2 coin size, yellow and runny). This is a normal minimum amount of stools until your baby is six weeks old. If baby has less than two stools, or no stools, please contact your midwife to let them know as soon as possible.

**Tip:** Always inform your midwife about any concerns you have about yourself as well as your baby – both of you are equally important.



## Day 6

You may find your baby is unsettled in the early evening – this can be worrying if they cry and want to feed lots. However, this is common in the first few months, and if your baby is contented after other feeds in the day then this does not have anything to do with your milk production. If you are concerned, please contact the Sherwood Birthing Unit at any time.

Babies need comfort from you at this time; responding to their needs will make them feel secure and nurture their brain development.

**Tip:** Ask your partner or family member to take turns with holding and comforting baby, or carry baby in a sling – please refer to current safety advice on sling use from Lullaby Trust.

## Day 7

You've made it to a week of being a new parent. Keep responding to your baby's cues for feeding and comfort; they are not capable of learning a routine and also cry less when their parents respond to them. Baby should have six or more heavy wet nappies, and at least two stools – yellow, watery and seedy.

You may be feeling a mixture of emotions, especially if a lot has changed, and you're also recovering from birth. Things may feel overwhelming for you, and your partner, so talk to each other and keep reminding yourself that these hard parts will pass.

**Tip:** Reach out if you need support. Talk to your family, friends, midwife, local breast/chest feeding support group, your GP or health visitor, or national helplines.

## Day 8-10

If you're thinking about going out, remember you have a legal right to breast/chest feed your baby anywhere you wish in public, and you do not have to cover up. Wear clothes that are easy to adjust and if you are nervous, feed your baby in front of a mirror at home to see how little of your body is actually visible. There is also a breast/chest feeding and expressing pod in the main entrance of King's Mill Hospital, which also has a nappy changing table.

**Tip:** Wear a vest top under a loose t-shirt. Pull the vest top down, and the t shirt up and feed your baby – you don't need to use a muslin or cover using this method and it doesn't require any special clothing.





## Links:

**SFH Infant feeding – videos and useful links:** <https://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk/our-services/maternity/infant-feeding/>

**Support groups:** <https://www.nottinghamshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/bis-who-can-support-you-with-breastfeeding>

**Photographs reproduced courtesy of the US Breastfeeding Committee and staff at Sherwood Forest Hospitals.**







### **Further sources of information**

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

### **Patient Experience Team (PET)**

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692

**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional

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