

Breast Feeding

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IT would sound strange if I ask a mother "How do you feed your baby?". Every mother has been breast-feeding her baby from the origin of mankind itself. Yet there is need to educate the mother on the correct procedure of breast-feeding and impress upon them its importance for the growth and development of the child. It is often felt that the "modern mother" is not aware of the qualities of mother's milk and thus they tend to neglect breast-feeding whereby the child is deprived of its advantages.

The digestive power of infants is so poor in the early periods that they can digest only mother's milk. This is why even the cow's milk is diluted before feeding the infant.

In mother's milk the concentration of proteins, minerals, carbohydrate, fat and vitamins is always according to the digestive capacity of infants. This much concentration and quantity is enough for the infant up to the age of 6 months. Breast milk contains Vitamin C which is destroyed in cow's milk when boiled.

Mother's milk is always of body temperature which is acceptable to babies. It needs no heating or sterilization.

Breast feeding helps build psychological relationship between the mother and the baby.

At any time of the day or night the baby can be breast-fed whenever the baby is hungry. The baby finds a ready and natural taste for the mother's milk which can be made available free of cost.

Mothers should feed their babies on breasts at least up to the first 6 months. After that they need more nourishing diet because of their rapid growth. The best schedule for breast feeding will be :

(i) Up to the age of 2 months babies should get 6 feeds every 3 hours, excluding the mid-night feed.

(ii) In later months the feed should be reduced to 5, excluding the midnight feed.

(iii) While feeding, the baby should be held by the mother in the semi-sitting position. The mother should spread her one upper limb over the back so that the head may rest upon the arm of that limb. The other hand of mother should hold the breast.

(iv) The mother should bring the nipple of the breast to the mouth of the baby so that the child has no trouble in finding it. This is very necessary because the difficulty in finding the nipple would help the child form the habit of irritation.

(v) Feed the child first on one breast and then on the other. Let the baby remain on the breast till it is fully satisfied.

(vi) After the baby is satisfied, keep her on the shoulder and pat over the back for sometime till eruption of air occurs. It is an important part of the feeding because it prevents vomiting and regurgitation of milk.

(vii) Mothers must keep their breasts clean by wearing clean undergarments. Use of talcum powder should be avoided.

The more nourishing the mother's diet, the more nourishing the breast milk will be. If breast-milk is not available for the baby under any circumstances cow's milk would be the next best choice. Cow's milk should be given after dilution as shown in the table.

Besides cow's milk, baby food is also available in the form of powder milk. These are also good and the pattern of dilution recommended by the manufactures should be strictly followed in case of its use.

If you will keep in view the above facts your baby will not suffer from vomiting, diarrhoea, distension of abdomen and fever but lead a healthy life.

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DILUTION OF COWS MILK

AGE	MILK	DILUTION
1 month	1 part milk	1 part water
2 months	2 parts milk	1 part water
3 months	3 —do—	—do—
4 months	4 —do—	—do—
5 months	5 —do—	—do—
6 months	whole milk without adding of water.	