

Breastfeeding in Worcester:

*A Practical Guide for
Parents, Families,
and Advocates.*



The City of Worcester

Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health

Worcester Division of Public Health
Maternal & Child Health Office

Dear Friend,

You are not alone.

Although breastfeeding has many benefits, it comes with challenges and there is not one best feeding plan.

The purpose of this guide is to help you prepare for the journey ahead.

We hope this guide will help you navigate your own journey and thrive.

With Love,

Maternal-Child Health Office
Worcester Division of Public Health



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1. Pregnancy, Birth & Making the Decision to Breastfeed

Why Breastfeed?

Breastfeeding benefits both you and your baby.



Remember:

Every family's feeding journey is different. You get to choose what's best for you and your baby.

Breastfeeding Benefits



FOR MOM

- Supports healing after birth
- Reduces risk of developing:
 - Breast Cancer
 - Ovarian Cancer
 - Type 2 diabetes
 - High Blood Pressure



FOR BABY

- Provides complete nutrition
- Contains antibodies that help fight illness
- Supports healthy growth & development
- Helps baby feel safe, warm, secure, and loved.



ADDITIONAL USES FOR BREAST MILK

- Milk baths may help with skin irritation
- Breastmilk can be frozen and used as a teething soother

2. Creating a Breastfeeding Plan

Things to consider:

- ✓ Do you plan to exclusively nurse or are you planning to pump and bottle feed? Or combine breast milk and formula?
- ✓ How long do you want to breastfeed?
- ✓ Do you plan to breastfeed while working? What would that schedule look like?
- ✓ Who can you lean on for support?

It is OKAY to not have all the answers. Plans can change, and that's okay. Talk with your healthcare provider to make sure your baby is getting the nutrition they need.



Feeding Expectations



Newborns typically need to eat every 2-3 hours, or 8-12 times in 24 hours.



For about the first 6 months, babies must exclusively consume breast milk or formula (meaning not even water, MILK ONLY), otherwise directed by your healthcare provider.



You may need to feed or pump at work, in public spaces, and while traveling.



It's okay to use formula where necessary. A fed baby is the goal!



Setting Realistic Expectations

Breastfeeding can be challenging. You may face unexpected situations such as:

- Low milk supply
- Pain or injury
- Baby weaning early
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Health concerns

The reality is no matter how hard you try to plan, things happen. This guide can't cover every situation, but support is always available **(see section 8)**.

There is no reason to feel ashamed if you need to use formula for any reason. Your baby can still get all the nutrients they need to grow and thrive. Choose the plan that works for you!



3. Returning to Work

With planning and support, you can continue breastfeeding when you return to work.

- Talk to your employer early to create a pumping plan that fits your work schedule.
- Identify a private space for expressing milk and a refrigerator or insulated cooler for storage.
- Discuss flexible break times and cleaning arrangements for pump equipment.
- Know your rights: You have the right to reasonable break time and a private space to pump (under the PUMP Act).



TIP: Try pumping at the times your baby would normally feed to help maintain your milk supply!

4. Breastfeeding Basics: How does it work?

Milk Production Overview

Your body begins preparing to make breast milk during pregnancy and produces *colostrum*.

- **Colostrum** is the first milk your baby receives. It is small in volume but packed with nutrients and antibodies that help protect your baby's immune system.

After birth and the delivery of the placenta, hormone changes signal your body to make more milk.

This usually happens about 2–5 days after birth, when many parents notice their milk "coming in."



Supply & Demand

Breast milk production works on a **supply-and-demand** system:



The more often milk is removed by breastfeeding or pumping, the more milk your body makes.



If milk stays in the breast for long periods, your body receives the message to slow down milk production.



When your baby nurses, the stimulation of the nipple sends signals to your brain to release hormones:

- **Prolactin** tells your body to make more milk.
- **Oxytocin** causes the "let-down reflex," which moves milk through the milk ducts so it can flow to your baby.

Over the first few weeks, your milk supply adjusts to meet your baby's needs.

Colostrum & Mature Milk

Colostrum (The First Milk):

Colostrum is the first milk your body makes during pregnancy and in the first 2-5 days after birth.

- Thick and yellow in color
- Small in amount, but packed with nutrients and antibodies helping protect babies from infections and support healthy growth.
- Perfect for a newborn's tiny stomach.

Mature Milk:

After your milk “comes in” it changes to mature milk.

- Thinner and more watery looking
- Provides all the nutrition most babies need for about the first 6 months
- Contains the right balance of water, carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, and minerals to support your baby's growth and development.



Knowing Baby is Getting Enough Milk

Look for these signs:

- 6-8 wet diapers a day after day 5
- Steady weight gain
- You hear swallowing sounds during feeds
- Baby seems satisfied after feeds
- 3 or more stools a day in the first few weeks

Hunger Cues

Feed your baby when you see early hunger cues:

Early cues

- Opening mouth
- Rooting
- Bringing hands to mouth

Late cues

- Crying
- Try to feed before baby gets to the crying stage!*

**If you're ever unsure, reach out to a
lactation professional for support**



When Should I Call Someone?



Contact your healthcare provider or lactation professional if:

- ✓ Baby has fewer wet diapers than expected
 - ✓ Feeding is very painful
 - ✓ Baby isn't gaining weight
- ✓ You notice fever, redness, or severe breast pain
- ✓ You're worried about your milk supply
 - ✓ You have any other concerns.

5. Breastfeeding Positions



Always support your baby's head and bring baby to you (nose to nipple, chin to breast).

6. Milk Storage & Handling



BREAST MILK STORAGE GUIDELINES

WHERE	FRESH (Recently pumped)	THAWED (Previously frozen)
 Room Temperature 77°F (29°C)	Up to 4 HOURS	1-2 HOURS
 Refrigerator 40°F (4°C)	Up to 4 DAYS	Up to 24 HOURS
 Freezer 0°F (18°C)	Within 6 MONTHS is best. Up to 12 months	NEVER REFREEZE human milk that has already been thawed



SAFE HANDLING TIPS



Wash hands
before
pumping or
handling milk.



Use clean
containers
and pump
parts.



Label milk
with date &
time before
storing.

7. Common Breastfeeding Challenges

You are not alone. Challenges are common.

Here are some solutions that can help!

- **Sore nipples:** Check latch, try different positions, use lanolin, or expressed milk.
- **Engorgement:** Feed or pump often, use warm compress before feeding and a cool compress after.
- **Sleepy baby:** Try skin-to-skin contact, unclothe baby, gently stimulate, feed more frequently.
- **Difficulty latching:** Try different positions, seek help from a lactation consultant.
- **Low milk supply:** Feed or pump often, make sure baby is latching well.



Tips for Overcoming Challenges

- Seek guidance from lactation professionals or healthcare providers
- Practice different feeding positions
- Use skin-to-skin contact
- Take care of your emotional well-being
- Monitor for signs of infection or persistent pain

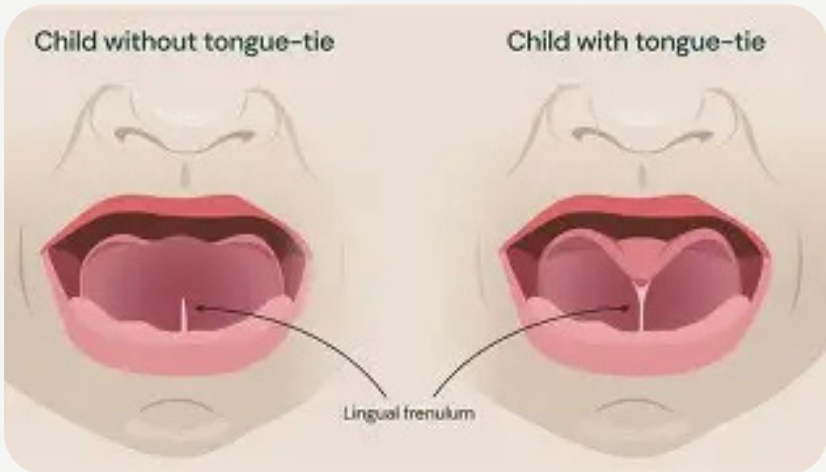
***It's okay to ask for help. You don't
have to figure this out alone!***



What is a tongue tie?

Tongue tie (ankyloglossia, occurs when the small band of tissue connecting the underside of the tongue to the floor of the mouth is usually short, thick or tight, limiting the tongue's range of motion.

Tongue tie is present at birth and often inherited. If your baby has difficulty latching, speak to your pediatrician.



8. Connecting You to Resources

Baby Cafe at Family Health Center of Worcester

508-860-7700 ext. 5725

Virtual and in-person sessions | Monday - Friday, 10 am - noon

Interpreter services available

Zoom Meeting ID: 99590327366

In-person: 26 Queen St, Worcester, MA 01610

WIC Peer Led Breastfeeding Support

Available to WIC participants only

Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 5 pm

Call 774-303-0272 (extension 5724)

Black Breastfeeding Circle Support Group

Virtual and in-person sessions Thursdays 6 pm – 8 pm & Saturdays 10 am - 12 pm

16 Shaffner St.,

Worcester, MA 01605

Worcester RISE for Health & For Babies Best Lactation Support Groups

Virtual & in-person!

38 Chestnut St, Worcester MA

Saint Vincent's Hospital - Lactation Warm Line

508-363-7499

123 Summer st, Worcester, MA 01608

UMass Lactation - Memorial Medical Center

Support group: 508-334-6455 | Warm Line: 508-334-6455

119 Belmont Street Worcester, MA 01605

Vital Village Warmline

857-301-8259

Email: breastfeedingboston@gmail.com

ZIP MILK

A database to find breastfeeding support resources near you.

Visit www.zipmilk.org and enter your zip code

La Leche League International

Breastfeeding information/find support gatherings near you

Call: 800) 525-3243 or (877) 452-5324 to find a local leader

NIH Drug and Lactation Database (LactMed)

Search for medication interactions while breastfeeding

Mother's Milk Bank of New England

Accepting donations of breast milk | www.milkbankne.org

**We're here to support you
every step of the way!**

Need Help Now?

**Call your healthcare provider or local
lactation support line.**

**Scan the QR code for local resources
and support groups!**



**Every family's feeding journey is unique.
You are doing great!**



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