



# Your WIC Guide to Breastfeeding



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## Note:

Being inclusive is important to us. References to mothers are inclusive of all birthing parents. References to lactation and breastfeeding are inclusive of chestfeeding and exclusive pumping. Any use of the term mother, maternal, or breastfeeding is not meant to exclude transgender or non-binary parents who may be breastfeeding or providing human milk to their infant.



# Why Choose Breastfeeding

- Breastmilk is all your baby needs for the first 6 months after birth. Around 6 months of age your baby will be ready to start solid foods, in addition to breastmilk. As your baby grows, your milk changes to meet your baby's nutritional needs. Ask your health care provider about vitamin D supplementation for your baby.
- Breastfed babies have fewer ear infections and allergies and less diarrhea. They are less likely to become overweight, obese, or develop diabetes.



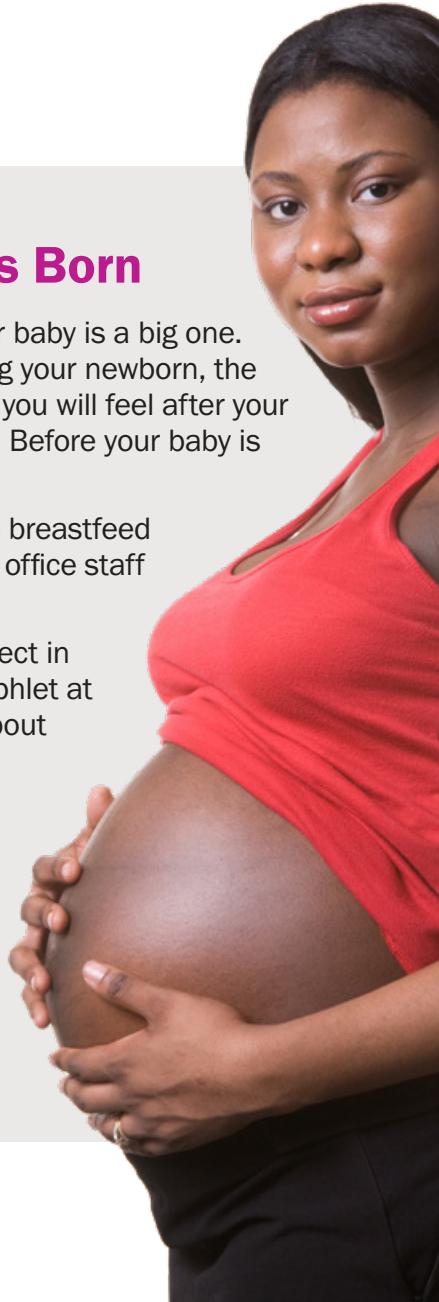
- Your breastmilk is always clean, safe, and at the right temperature.
- Breastfeeding is good for you! It helps you recover faster from childbirth, and it may help you lose pregnancy weight faster.
- Moms who breastfeed are less likely to develop diabetes, high blood pressure, and certain types of cancer.

- Breastfeeding is a convenient and easy way to feed baby anywhere, at home or on the go! No bottles to carry and clean or formula to mix.
- Breastfeeding is better for the environment. It does not need packaging, bottles, and soap for washing these items.

## Before Your Baby is Born

The decision for how to feed your baby is a big one. The more you learn about feeding your newborn, the more confident and comfortable you will feel after your baby is born. WIC is here to help! Before your baby is born you may:

- Learn how to hold your baby to breastfeed comfortably and how your WIC office staff can help.
- Learn more about what to expect in [The Hospital Experience](#) pamphlet at [MyFamily.WIC.ca.gov](http://MyFamily.WIC.ca.gov) or ask about classes available from WIC.
- Check with your health care provider and local hospital for available prenatal classes.
- Call the number on your health plan card to find out what breastfeeding services and supplies are covered.



# Breastfeeding Basics



## How Your Body Makes Milk



### During Pregnancy

During pregnancy, your body starts getting ready to make milk. As milk making tissues rapidly grow, you may notice your breasts become fuller and more tender.

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### After Your Baby is Born

Your baby's sucking causes your breasts to make milk. The more your baby breastfeeds, the more milk you make.

When your baby feeds, it also tells your breast to release milk. This process is called the let-down reflex. It releases the milk so you can breastfeed your baby.

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### Your Milk Changes as Your Baby Grows

There are three phases of breastmilk—colostrum, transitional milk, and mature milk. Each phase of making milk is important to nourishing your baby.





## First Weeks

### Day 1 .....

#### **Colostrum**

This is the first milk produced by the breast. It is thick, yellowish, and rich in nutrients. These small drops of milk provide everything your baby needs in the first few hours and days of life.

### Days 2-4 .....

#### **Transitional Milk**

Around 2 to 4 days after birth, your breasts begin to make a lot more milk. This transitional milk is often described as your milk coming in. Breasts may feel fuller for a few days, then soften. This is normal and does not mean you have less milk. Transitional milk will last until about the second week.

### 2-3 Weeks and Beyond .....

#### **Mature Milk**

Mature milk starts about 10 to 15 days after birth. It looks thinner but is full of nutrients and health-protecting immunities for your growing baby. Mature milk continues to change with your baby's needs.

# Making Enough Milk

- The more you breastfeed your baby or pump your milk, the more milk you make. Using formula, even a small amount, will reduce the amount of breastmilk you make.
- Newborn babies have small stomachs, so they need to breastfeed often. Feed 8 to 12 times or more in 24 hours.



## What Size is a Newborn Baby's Stomach?

Day 1 the baby's stomach is about the size of a cherry. By 1 month their stomach is about the size of an egg.

### Day 1

Small frequent feedings of colostrum. **1 to 1 ½ teaspoons**



Cherry

### Day 3

Baby feeds more often, so amount of milk you make increases. **4 ½ to 5 ½ teaspoons**



Walnut

### Week 1

Baby feeds often. Now drinking about **1 ½ to 2 oz.** at each feeding.



Apricot

### 1 Month

Feeding often helps make milk. Baby now drinking about **2 ½ oz.** at each feeding.



Egg

6 teaspoons = 1 oz. | 30 ml = 1 oz.



## Feed Your Baby Often

- Feed your baby 8 to 12 times or more in 24 hours.
- Be flexible. There is no set length of time for feedings. The feedings may be about 10 to 20 minutes per breast. Your baby will let you know when they are finished feeding. Watch for their [hunger and fullness cues](#).
- Feed your baby on the first breast until it is very soft or your baby shows fullness cues. Burp your baby then offer the second breast. Alternate the breast you start with each feeding.
- If you choose to use a pacifier, wait to use until at least 1 month of age to ensure breastfeeding is going well.
- Another sign to feed your baby is when your breasts feel full. Feeding will keep your breasts from becoming overfull or engorged. Some babies need to be awakened to feed. Talk with your WIC counselor if you have questions.





## Expressing your breastmilk by hand?

Every breastfeeding mom can learn to hand express her milk. You never know when your pump might stop working or you may forget a part of the pump at home. Using hand expression along with pumping can also increase the amount of milk you are able to store for your baby.

### To hand express:

- Wash your hands.
- Use a clean container with a wide opening to collect your milk.





- 1 Position your thumb above the nipple and your fingers below the nipple about 1-2 inches behind your nipple. Your thumb and fingers will make the letter "C" shape.

- 2 Press your fingers and thumb back toward your chest.



- 3 Gently compress your fingers and thumb together without lifting or moving fingers.

- 4 Release and then repeat. Move your hand in a circular pattern around your breast after every few compressions or whenever milk flow stops. Moving around your breast helps you release all of your milk.



Illustrations provided by B. Elliott.



## Finding Comfortable Positions

Try different breastfeeding positions and find the ones that work for you and your baby. Keep these tips in mind:

- Your body is comfortable and not leaning over the baby.
- Baby's chest fully faces your body.
- Baby is held close to you. If your baby's hands are in the way, gently move them out of the way. Then, bring your baby in closer.
- Baby's body, head, shoulders and hips are in a straight line. Their chin is not turned to the side or tucked in.

## Laid Back

- Lie back semi-reclined. This position is the best way to help your baby use their natural instincts.
- Lay your baby on top of you with their face near your breasts.
- Support your baby's body. Gravity holds the baby to you. Your baby will gradually find the nipple and latch.



## Cradle



- Sit with your back supported and the baby supported across your forearm, holding baby close.
- Cradle the baby's head near your elbow.
- Have baby facing your breast at nipple level. Head is not turned to the side.
- Keep baby's body in a straight line, with ears, shoulders, and hips lined up.
- Support your arm with a pillow if needed. A small footstool or books can help raise your feet to shift the weight and reduce any tension.



## Cross Cradle

- Begin by holding your baby in the cradle position. Place your free hand around your baby, supporting the neck and shoulders, and remove your other arm from under the baby. Baby's bottom rests in the bend of your arm.
- Keep the baby's body in a straight line, with the ear, shoulder, and hips lined up and mouth at nipple level.
- Use a pillow to support your arm if needed.
- Use your hand to support baby's shoulders and neck, not the baby's head. Do not push on the baby's head. This will cause your baby to push against your hand and pull away from your breast.
- Consider this position if you have had a cesarean delivery. Also, good for smaller babies.





## Clutch or Football



- Place the baby's back on top of your forearm at your side with baby's head at nipple level.
- Support the baby's shoulders and neck with your hand. Your hand does not push against baby's head.
- Use a pillow or rolled-up baby blanket under your arm to help bring the baby to breast level, if needed.
- Support the baby's legs on a pillow at your side.
- Bring the baby up over your breast from underneath.
- Consider this position if you have large breasts, have had a cesarean delivery, or have flat or inverted nipples. Also, good for feeding 2 babies at the same time.

## Lying Down

- Lie on your side, with your knees slightly bent.
- Place baby on their side with baby's chest facing your chest. Baby's mouth should be near your nipple.
- Place your lower arm or a pillow under your head and use your other arm to bring baby close and to support baby's neck and back.
- Put the baby to your breast and then raise or lower your breast to keep baby latched.
- Be careful not to have any loose clothing or bedding near baby.
- Consider this position if you have had a difficult delivery or for night feeds.



# Tips for a Good Latch

Latch is the way a baby attaches to the breast. A good latch is important to:

- Make sure baby gets enough breastmilk
- Avoid sore nipples
- Help your breasts make more breastmilk



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Many parents and babies may need a little help and reassurance in the beginning. WIC is here to help! Here are some tips:

- Find a comfortable position with lots of support. Snuggle your baby in close to you.
- Line up baby’s nose with your nipple. Baby’s head can then tilt back, letting their mouth reach up and over your nipple.
- A wide-open mouth helps baby to get more of the areola, the darker skin around your nipple, in their mouth.
- Watch to see that baby’s chin and lower lip touch the breast first. Once on the breast, baby’s chin will be pushed in against the breast.

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You can tell your baby is latched well and getting milk if:

- Both of their lips are curled out wide, not tucked in
- Cheeks are rounded
- You can hear or see baby swallowing
- You do not feel pain while breastfeeding



## Support from Others

- Stay positive. Things will get easier. It is okay to ask for support and to need encouragement.
- Limit your visitors and visiting times at the hospital while you and baby are learning to breastfeed.
- Share with others what to expect, especially for crying and sleeping. Get more information from the WIC pamphlet, [Getting to Know Your Baby](#).
- Let others know why you choose to breastfeed and ask that they support and respect your infant feeding decision.
- Ask for help with picking up older kids from school, cooking, cleaning, laundry, and chores.
- Accept offers of meals. Consider having a list ready. Friends and family find it helpful to know what you like.



# Parents Want to Know













## How do I know that my baby is getting enough to eat?

- You can tell your baby is getting enough to eat by their weight gain and the number of diapers they use.
- Newborns will probably lose a few ounces in the first few days. Then, they will gain weight and get back to their birth weight by around 2 weeks. Make sure to take your baby to their doctor appointments.





- You can use the chart to get an idea of the number of diapers a breastfeeding baby may have. If your baby uses fewer diapers or you have concerns, check with your health care provider or WIC counselor.
- The number of wet diapers will increase each day the first week.
- At first, poops will be thick, black, and tarry. By day 3, poops should be thinner and greener. By day 4, poops should be more yellow. By day 5, most babies will have at least 3 to 4 yellow, mustard-like, seedy, loose stools. Only count poops bigger than the size of a quarter.

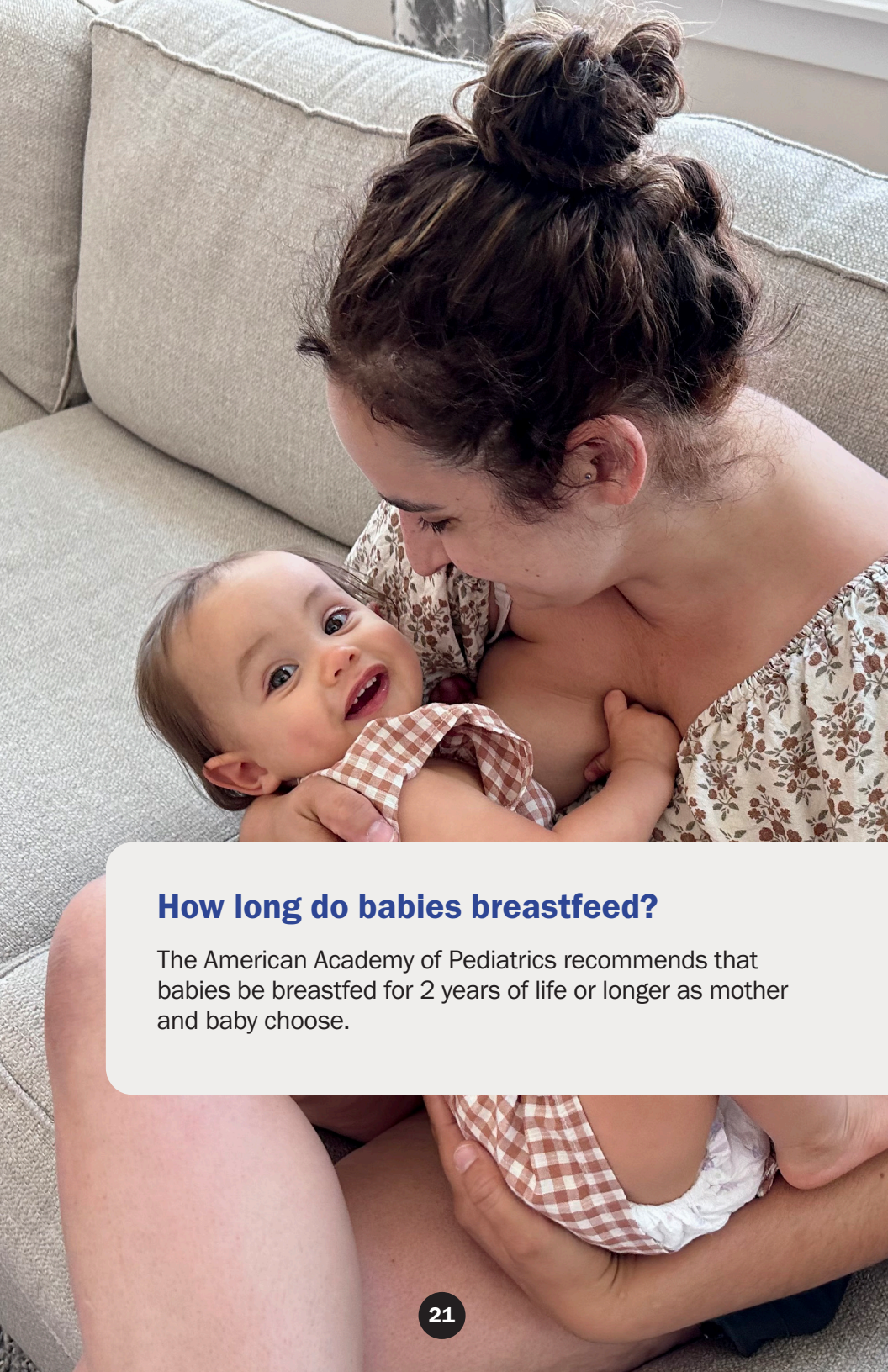
	Wet Diapers	Poopy Diapers
1 Day		
2 Days		
3 Days		
4 Days		
5-6 Days		



**Baby may have more wet and poopy diapers each day.**







## **How long do babies breastfeed?**

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies be breastfed for 2 years of life or longer as mother and baby choose.

# Will I have to watch what I eat and drink when I breastfeed?

- There are no special foods to eat for breastfeeding. Aim to eat a variety of healthy foods. You will make good milk even if you do not eat the right foods every day. WIC provides the breastfeeding parent a food package with more foods than a parent who does not breastfeed. Ask your WIC staff about what is included. Learn more at [MyFamily.WIC.ca.gov](http://MyFamily.WIC.ca.gov), [Your WIC Foods](#).



- You will want to drink enough fluids to satisfy your thirst. Drinking extra fluids will not make more breastmilk.



- [Caffeine](#) can pass into breastmilk and disrupt sleep for you and your baby. Drinking a small amount of coffee, up to 2 cups a day, or other drinks with caffeine is okay while breastfeeding. Too much caffeine can make your baby fussy or keep baby awake.
- According to the [Centers for Disease Control](#) and the [United States Department of Agriculture](#), not drinking alcohol is the safest option for breastfeeding mothers. However, moderate alcohol consumption, up to 1 drink a day, is not known to be harmful to the infant, especially if the parent waits at least 2 to 4 hours after a single drink before breastfeeding. Talk to your health care provider for further guidance.
- Using marijuana or tobacco during pregnancy or while breastfeeding can harm your baby. Smoking and vaping can be harmful to your family as well. Breathing secondhand smoke or e-cigarette aerosol is very harmful to infants and children. Talk to your health care provider or WIC staff about feeding your baby if you have concerns. Get more tips and learn more at [MyFamily.WIC.ca.gov](http://MyFamily.WIC.ca.gov) in the pamphlets, [Marijuana and Pregnancy](#), and [Healthy You!](#)



## What do I need to know about using a breast pump?

Call your health plan member services while you are pregnant if you plan to pump for an extended amount of time. If you cannot get a pump from your health plan, contact WIC to see if you will be able to get a pump once your baby is born.

In the hospital, if your baby is unable to breastfeed or you are choosing to pump, it is important to begin pumping within 6 hours of delivery. Use a double electric pump and ask your nurse or breastfeeding specialist for help.



Pumping as often as a baby normally drinks breastmilk should help your body make the amount of milk your baby needs. This amount may differ from baby to baby and can change as babies grow. If you are not able to pump as much milk as your baby wants to eat, you may want to add another pumping session. Contact your WIC counselor for answers to your questions about pumps and pumping your breastmilk.



## How do I store my breastmilk?

When you are storing breastmilk, you can use it fresh, refrigerate it, or freeze it for use later. Ask your WIC staff what storing options make the most sense for you and your baby. Get some tips and learn more at [MyFamily.WIC.ca.gov](http://MyFamily.WIC.ca.gov), [Breastmilk Storage](#).

### Storage Locations and Temperatures

Type of Breastmilk	Countertop 77° F (25° C) or colder (room temperature)	Refrigerator 40° F (4° C)	Freezer 0° F (-18° C) or colder
Freshly Expressed or Pumped	Up to <b>4 Hours</b>	Up to <b>4 Days</b>	Within <b>6 months</b> is best Up to <b>12 months</b> is acceptable
Thawed, Previously Frozen	<b>1-2 Hours</b>	Up to <b>1 Day</b> (24 hours)	<b>Never refreeze</b> human milk after it has been thawed
Leftover From a Feeding (baby did not finish the bottle)	Use within <b>2 hours</b> after the baby is finished feeding		

# When to Ask for Help



## Sore Nipples

Your nipples may be sensitive or tender as they adjust to breastfeeding. If you are having lasting pain or soreness, or if your nipples are sore, cracked, blistered, or bleeding, talk to a WIC breastfeeding counselor. Our experts can help you feel more comfortable.



## Swollen and Painful Breasts

Engorgement happens when breasts become swollen and painful, maybe because of missed or delayed feedings. Your baby may not be able to latch very well. Call WIC as soon as possible for guidance. They may suggest hand expressing a small amount of breastmilk. You also can ask them about softening the areola to help baby latch. Do not offer formula supplements, skip or stop breastfeeding. This will only make the engorgement worse.



## Spitting Up

Spitting up is normal and does get better over time. To help prevent spitting up:

- Watch for fullness cues. Do not overfeed.
- Offer shorter, more frequent feedings.
- Burp halfway through feeding.
- Keep upright for 30 minutes after feeding.
- Talk to a WIC counselor if you have questions.



## WIC Resources



### **The Hospital Experience**

The brochure provides tips to help you know what to expect at the hospital. [Download PDF](#)

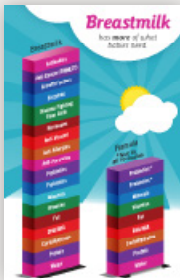
[MyFamily.WIC.ca.gov](http://MyFamily.WIC.ca.gov)





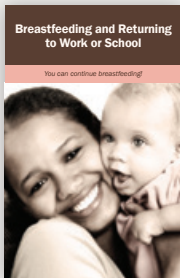
### 3 Newborn Feeding Secrets

Knowing these secrets will help you feel more confident feeding your baby. [Download PDF](#)



### Breastmilk Compared to Formula

Breastmilk is rich in vitamins, minerals, and antibodies that help your baby grow healthy and strong. [Download PDF](#)



### Breastfeeding and Returning to Work or School

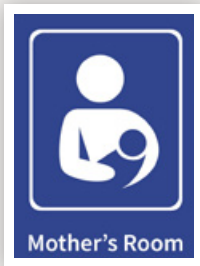
Many parents keep breastfeeding after returning to work or school. Learn how to hand express your breastmilk and much more. [Download PDF](#)



## How Do I Keep Up a Good Milk Supply

The more often you breastfeed, the more milk you will make.

[Download PDF](#)



## Know Your Breastfeeding Rights

There are laws in place to help you meet your breastfeeding goals, including laws about breastfeeding in public and pumping at work.

The [California Breastfeeding Coalition](#) has information on both your state and federal rights. This website also has information on filing complaints when your rights are violated.



## Feed Me Birth to 6 Months

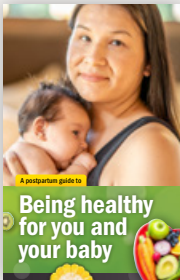
The first 6 months is full of changes. Look here for tips and guidance on how to feed your baby, including how to know if they are getting enough.

[Download PDF](#)



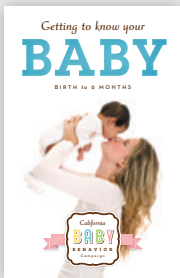
## Marijuana and Pregnancy

The choices that you make during pregnancy and after delivery can affect your baby's health now and in the years ahead. [Download PDF](#)



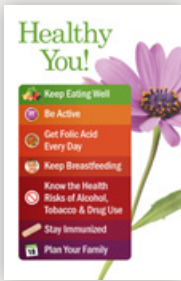
## A Postpartum Guide to Being Healthy for You and Your Baby

Having a baby can be one of the most joyful times. There may also be times when you feel overwhelmed and emotional. Here, we share tips and advice from other parents to help you thrive. [Download PDF](#)



## Getting to Know Your Baby

Learn about baby behavior to help understand your baby's needs. This booklet answers questions about sleep, hunger and fullness cues, and crying. [Download PDF](#)



## Healthy You

Seven tips for a healthy family.

[Download PDF](#)

# Families Grow Healthy with WIC!

WIC is a great place to go for breastfeeding support and education.



**California Department of Public Health, California WIC program**

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

**1-800-852-5770 | MyFamily.WIC.ca.gov**

Rev 10/24