

# Your guide to the

Getting to grips with breastfeeding can be tricky. Here's how to get it right from the start, and get help if you're struggling

BY CAMILLA RANKIN

**B**reastmilk is free. Every mother can do it. So why is it that only 25 percent of South African mothers are still breastfeeding after their babies reach six months old? It may be the most natural thing in the world, but breastfeeding does not always come naturally. Here are the top three tips to help you breastfeed successfully.

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

So you are keen to try breastfeed: how can you make sure that it all goes as smoothly as possible? There are three key steps to getting breastfeeding right: getting off to a good start; getting a good grip (latching well); and positioning.

### The "be-witching" hour

As long as there are no medical complications, your baby is ready to feed immediately after birth and most will almost always latch onto your breast within the first hour of life. In fact the best start is to place your baby skin-to-skin on your chest between your breasts (tummy to mommy) as soon as he is born. Many practitioners call this the magic hour, not only for bonding, but also for that very first feed. If your baby does not latch straight away, don't panic. There is no rush, especially with a full-term, healthy baby. Having your newborn, skin-to-skin, for as long as possible straight after birth sets the foundations for successful breastfeeding in the future.

### Get a grip – a good grip

One of the fundamentals of successful breastfeeding is getting your baby to latch correctly – an incorrect latch can mean a

lot of nipple pain and an irritable, hungry baby: never a good combination. Some babies get the hang of it straight away and others need a little bit of help. An effective latch is a deep latch where your baby's mouth opens wide enough to get a large amount of the areola – the darker circle of skin around the nipple – in. Help your baby to latch well by holding him close to your body with his tummy facing yours: tummy to tummy, and his nose level with your nipple. Then, support your breast, holding it well back from the areola, while gently tickling his upper lip with your nipple until his mouth opens up wide, like he is yawning. When he does, pull him in chin first, quick and close so that he takes in as much of your breast as possible.

You will know that your baby has a good grip if he does not need to turn his head while he is feeding; his chin touches your breast, his lips are flared almost like fish-shaped lips, you see no or only a little areola sticking out from his lips, his ear wiggles slightly and his jaw moves as he takes long, deep sucks. You will also feel a deep tug that is not painful and you can hear him swallowing with soft "ca-ca"-like sounds.

Once your baby has latched well he will suck rapidly until the milk starts to flow – the let down – then he will settle into a rhythm of sucking, swallowing and breathing as his suck becomes slower, deeper and stronger.

### Hold me, baby

A relaxed mother means a relaxed baby, so get comfortable! While there are four conventional ways to hold and position your baby while breastfeeding, there are no hard and fast rules. As long as you

are comfortable and relaxed, and your baby is able to latch correctly then you can hold your baby in any position you want and enjoy.

✓ **MADONNA OR CRADLE HOLD** This is the most common hold. Hold your baby on your lap, tummy to tummy, with his head level with your nipple. Support his head in the crook of your arm, while the rest of your arm holds his neck, spine and bottom. If you find it comfortable, you can

## THE LIVING FOOD

**Yes, breast is best for your baby, but why? Not only is it always at the right temperature, comes pre-mixed in sterile containers and is available whenever it is demanded, but it is also the perfect food: it is a living food. Breastmilk has just the right amount of protein, water, essential fats and sugars to meet your baby's nutritional requirements: he does not need anything else for the first six months of his life. And breastmilk has other health boosting benefits too: Scientists have discovered close to 200 compounds in breastmilk that fight infection, help the immune system mature, aid digestion and support brain growth. The amazing thing about breastmilk is that it changes and adjusts its nutritional and immune boosting content to meet your baby's changing needs at any given time. So, for example, on a very hot day your breastmilk will contain more water to quench your baby's thirst and to prevent dehydration, or it creates immune protection based on whatever germs or viruses you have been exposed to.**

# milky way

also rest your arm on the sides of the chair, or place a pillow or breastfeeding cushion underneath it. You can use your free hand to position your nipple into his mouth, while your supporting arm guides baby towards your breast.

✓ **CROSS CRADLE** With this latch it is easier to see how well your baby has latched onto your breast and because of the extra support it provides, it is also useful for preemies. Hold baby tummy to tummy using the opposite arm to breast to hold him. Support the base of his neck with your fingers and use your palm to hold his shoulder and upper back.

✓ **SIDE-LYING HOLD** This is a great position for night feeds, or for getting some rest during a day-time feed. It is also good if you have had a c-section or episiotomy as it takes the pressure off your abdomen. You and your baby both lie on your sides, tummy to tummy, with his head level with your nipple. Rest your head on your hand, arm or a pillow, and you can use your free hand to guide your baby onto your nipple if needs be.

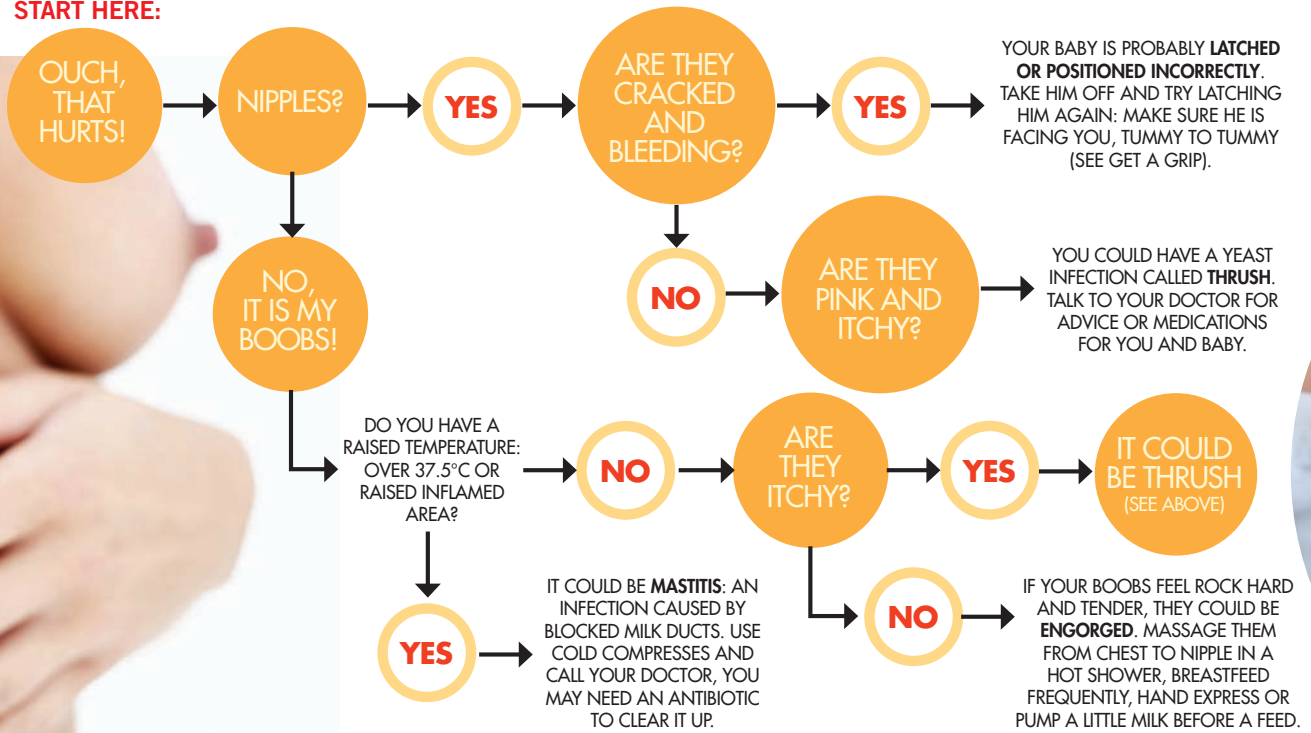
✓ **FOOTBALL HOLD** This is another hold that is useful if you have had a c-section, or if you have large breasts, flat or inverted nipples or a fast let-down as you are better able to control your baby's position. Hold your baby on the side you are going to feed him from, with his head level with your nipple and legs tucked up behind you, underneath your arm. Support your baby at the base of his neck and shoulders.

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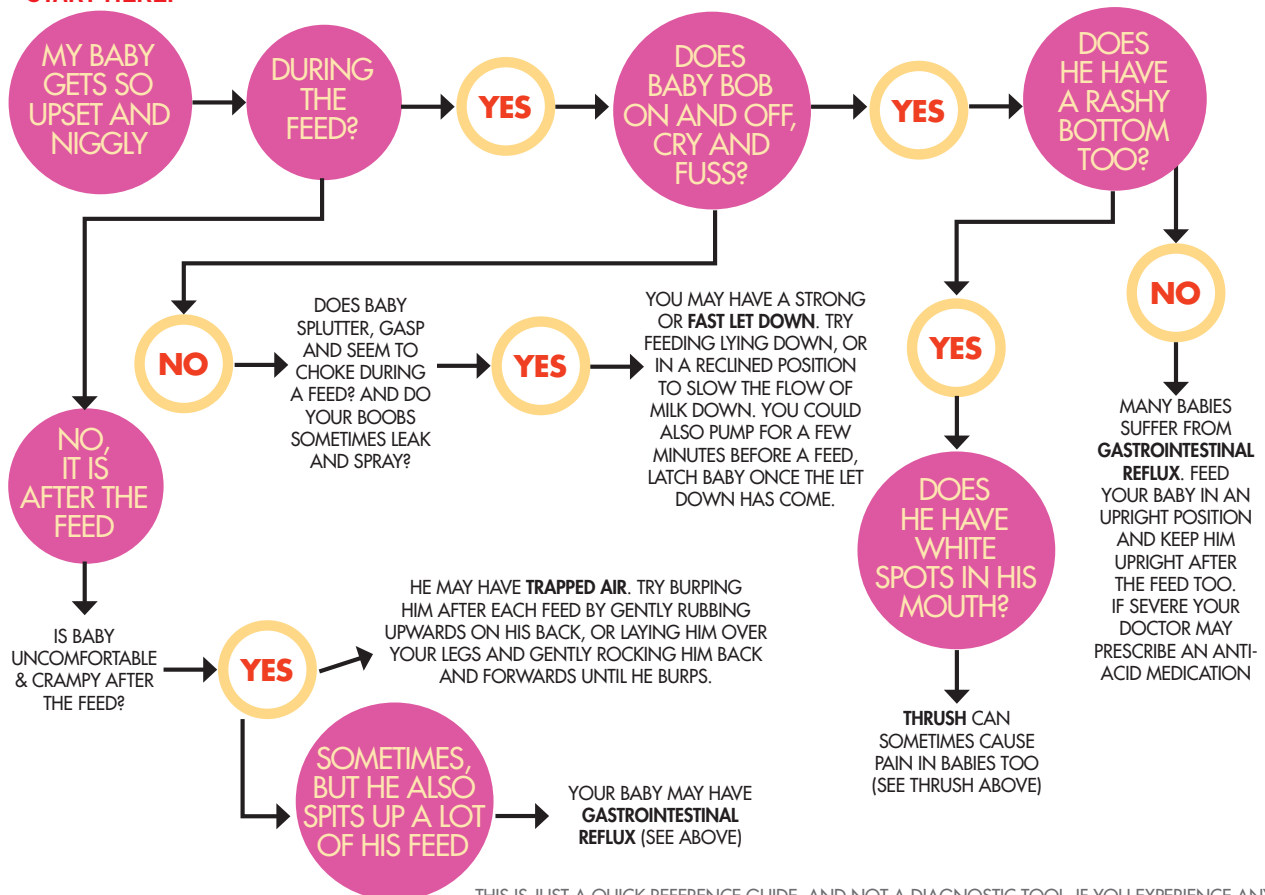
THE PERCENTAGE OF  
WATER IN BREASTMILK.  
BY MAKING MILK YOU  
BURN 200 TO 500  
CALORIES A DAY

## GO WITH THE 'MILK' FLOW

START HERE:



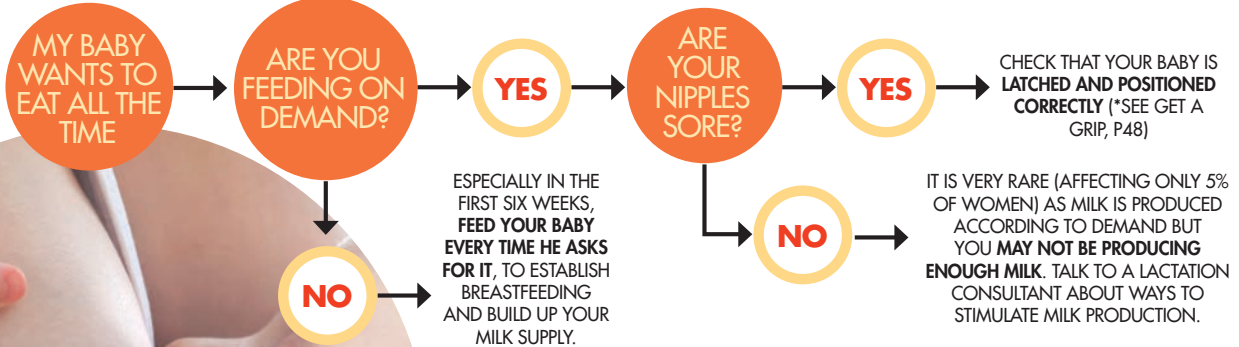
START HERE:



THIS IS JUST A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE, AND NOT A DIAGNOSTIC TOOL. IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THESE PROBLEMS, ALWAYS CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR OR A LACTATION CONSULTANT TO BE SURE.

# breastfeeding guide

START HERE:



NEED HELP? GO TO LA LECHE LEAGUE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S WEBSITE FOR A LIST OF LACTATION CONSULTANTS IN YOUR AREA: [WWW.LLLI.ORG/SOUTHAFRICA.HTML](http://WWW.LLLI.ORG/SOUTHAFRICA.HTML)

## PROTECT YOUR ASSETS

Now that you have done pregnancy, had a baby and are breastfeeding, does it seem like your once pert and perky breasts have a life of their own? It is true, they will keep changing shape and size with each stage and the best way to keep them looking their best is to dress them right. Go bra shopping.

### TIP

ONLY INVEST IN AN EXPENSIVE NURSING BRA ONCE YOU HAVE BEEN FEEDING FOR AT LEAST TWO WEEKS, AS YOUR BOOBS WILL THEN HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO STABILISE INTO THEIR NEW, BIGGER SIZE

## Bras to buy



◀ CARRIWELL SEAMLESS DROP CUP NURSING BRA, R275, Baby City, Babies R Us @ Toys R Us, Baby Boom, selected Clicks stores, Dis-Chem, Reggies, leading baby & maternity stores and selected pharmacies



◀ CARRIWELL SEAMLESS ADJUSTABLE NURSING BRA, R319,99, Baby City, Babies R Us @ Toys R Us, Baby Boom, selected Clicks stores, Dis-Chem, Reggies, leading baby & maternity stores and selected pharmacies



◀ CARRIWELL LACE FEEDING BRA, R139,99, Baby City, Babies R Us @ Toys R Us, Baby Boom, selected Clicks stores, Dis-Chem, Reggies, leading baby & maternity stores and selected pharmacies



◀ CARRIWELL LACE DROP CUP BRA, R349,99, Baby City, Babies R Us @ Toys R Us, Baby Boom, selected Clicks stores, Dis-Chem, Reggies, leading baby & maternity stores and selected pharmacies

## Bras to buy (CONTINUED)



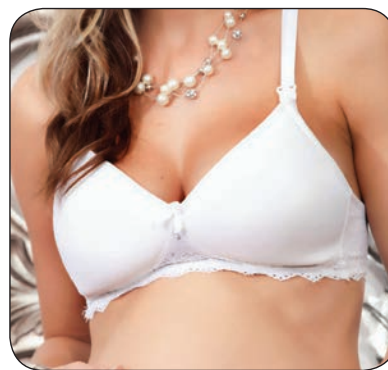
◀ **CARRIWELL SEAMLESS ORGANIC COTTON NURSING BRA**, R339,99, Baby City, Babies R Us @ Toys R Us, Baby Boom, selected Clicks stores, Dis-Chem, Reggies, leading baby & maternity stores & selected pharmacies



◀ **EXPRESSION BRA (FOR USE WITH BREAST PUMPS) FOR HANDS-FREE EXPRESSING**, R495, email Jane Pitt on info@breastpumps.co.za to order



◀ **EMBRACE ALL OVER LACE FEEDING BRA**, R325, Glam Baby Bedfordview (011 450 3348)



◀ **EMBRACE FOAM MOULDED FEEDING BRA**, R325, Glam Baby Bedfordview (011 450 3348)



◀ **CHERISHED BELLY NURSING TANK**, R245, order at www.cherishedbelly.co.za

## YOUR BEST BET FOR BRAS

- Get a professional measurement done at a maternity or lingerie shop.
- Look for a bra that provides convenient, easy access to the breast.
- Choose a bra made of cotton or other smooth breathable fabric and make sure that any decorative details are not scratchy and irritating to your skin, or will get in your baby's way.
- A bra with a four- to six-hook back closure is going to offer you the most flexibility in fit, and wide, cushioned, and non-stretch straps for best support.
- Your bra should be soft and supple and not restrict milk flow: so steer clear of underwires.

### DID YOU KNOW?

IT'S BEEN FOUND THAT BREASTFEEDING MOMS HAVE A LOWERED RISK OF PRE-MENOPAUSAL BREAST CANCER (BY UP TO 60 PERCENT WHERE THERE IS A FAMILY HISTORY) AND POSTNATAL DEPRESSION

### IN THE EXPRESS LANE

Expressing your milk can be a big help. You may even need a pump to stimulate milk production if your baby is not feeding effectively. Expressing your milk and storing it for later also means that dad can do a midnight feed, and give you a longer sleep.

#### Expressing by hand

The bonus with hand pumping is that it's

free, although you could need to contact a lactation consultant to learn how to do it effectively. This method requires practice and skill, but is also only suitable if you are seldom away from your baby – hand expressing is not going to be the best option if you're back at work.

#### Using a manual breast pump

You use your hand and wrist to operate a handheld device to pump milk. Manual

pumps are also not noisy so are perfect if you intend pumping from one breast, while baby is latched on to the other.

#### Using an electric breast pump

Runs on batteries or plugs into the electrical mains. If you are having multiples, a good electric pump is a must – they are easier and convenient. You can choose an electric breast pump that pumps one breast at a time, or a double version that can pump both breasts simultaneously. ●