

"Women should perform a monthly breast self-examination which is a great way to be familiar with your breasts' texture, size, and skin condition," said Praveen Kumar Bansal, senior consultant, medical oncology, Asian Institute of Medical Sciences (AIMS).

Women should not hesitate to see the doctor or nurse for a clinical breast examination if they notice a change in their breasts, Bansal said.

Experts agree that more awareness is needed among women, especially among those in the 30-50 age group.

Some basic precautions like marrying at the right age - between 20 and 26, breast feeding babies, abstaining from alcohol and smoking - can further pre-

vent the disease.

But at the same time, doctors are bewildered by the "unjustified" increase in the number of patients in a country where the majority of population adheres to these practices.

"The majority of women in our country marry at the right age, breast feed and don't consume liquor or smoke. Still, the numbers are rising which is very surprising," said Sahani.

Mammography is a test which examines the human breast and is used as a diagnostic and screening tool. The goal of mammography is early detection of breast cancer. The tests used for screening, diagnosis and monitoring, include mammograms, ultrasound, MRI, CAT scans, PET scans and more.

## Prevention

family

# Breastfeeding *for* Beginners

*New moms listen up, best tips to get you started with feeding your newborn*

■ BY KATHAKOLI DASGUPTA

BREAST MILK IS BEST for your baby. It provides her with all the essential nutrients she needs for a healthy growth. It boosts her immunity and her IQ too. Breastfeeding also helps you develop a bond with



your newborn. It's good for you, too: it wards off breast and ovarian cancers—and yes, it burns calories and helps you get back to your pre-pregnancy weight, too!

But it may be tough in the beginning—what with sore breasts and struggles to latch on. Don't give up—it gets easier with time. Here, a round-up of common breastfeeding issues and how to get better of them from Dr Rajiv Chhabra, neonatologist, Artemis Health Sciences, Gurgaon.

**You are not producing**

**enough milk:** This may keep your baby hungry and hinder her growth. Maternal anxiety and stress, along with improper latching may be possible causes.

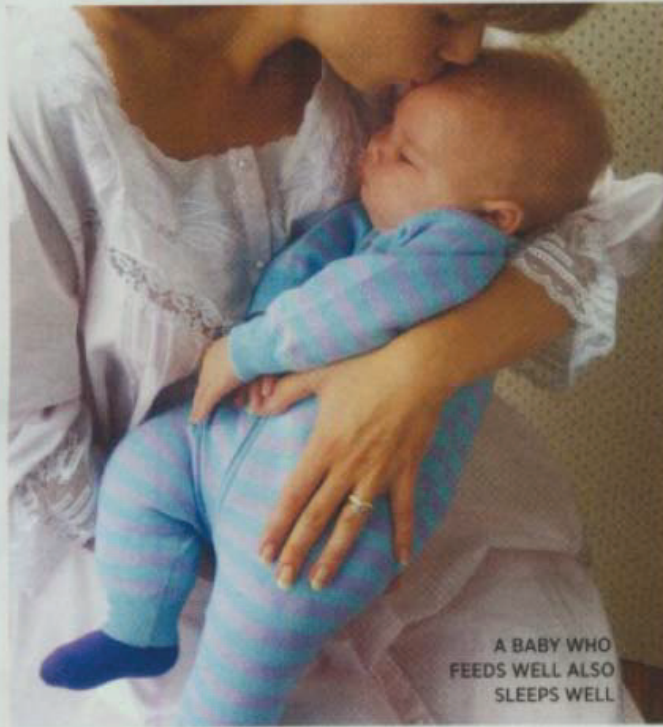
- **Fix it:** Take your paediatrician's help to learn proper techniques.
- **Keep trying:** Suckling (even non-nutritive) signals the brain to stimulate hormones to boost milk flow. Also keep stress at bay, and milk will flow.

**You have a problem of**

**plenty:** A letdown can happen in 3 to 4 days of breastfeeding, making your baby struggle with excess milk. It can result in swollen, tender, lumpy, engorged breasts.

- **Fix it:** Express excess milk between feeds and freeze it—you can use it within 24 hours after thawing it in warm water. Hot compresses can soothe the pain in your breast.





A BABY WHO  
FEEDS WELL ALSO  
SLEEPS WELL

## What else can you do?

Check if your baby is well fed with these guidelines

- ✓ Your baby is satisfied and rests or sleeps for about 2.5 to 3 hours between feeds
- ✓ Your baby wets nappy at least 5 to 6 times in a day; there's no specific poop count for a newborn though
- ✓ Your baby gains weight—about 20-30 g every day in the first couple of months

**Your nipples feel sore:** Improper latching or suckling (baby bites or feeds vigorously) causes sore nipples. It may sometimes be accompanied by cracks or cuts—this, untreated can result in mastitis.

▪ **Fix it:** Keep the nipples and breast dry and avoid tight bras. Apply non-toxic nipple creams between feeds—remember to wash off before feeding.

**You have mastitis:** A bacterial infection, usually in one breast, results in inflammation, redness, swelling, severe pain and may be accompanied by fever. Left untreated, this may cause an abscess in the breasts.

▪ **Fix it:** Topical antibiotics (or oral ones) will be prescribed. Use hot compresses to allay pain. Check with your doc if you

can feed the baby. Do express excess milk to avoid engorgement.

**Your milk ducts are blocked:** A painful, swollen, hard lump in your breast and sometimes, a red and inflamed patch near the lump, indicate this condition.

▪ **Fix it:** Continue feeding and use hot compresses, hot soaks and massage to quell the pain.

**You have thrush:** A fungal infection in the breast that can be passed on to or from the baby. It makes your nipples sore and itchy. Breast pads and tight bras may aggravate it.

▪ **Fix it:** Topical anti-fungal meds and keeping breasts clean will help. Avoid feeding until the infection subsides. ■