

Deciding How to Feed Your Baby

There are many different ways to feed your baby, but there is no one right way. Feeding decisions are personal and can be influenced by many factors, including your pathway to parenthood, health history, beliefs, values, goals, support systems, and culture, to name just a few.

This document was designed to help you make a thoughtful and informed decision about how to feed your baby. After working through these questions, we hope you have a better idea of what is important to you when discussing infant feeding with your care team and support people.

To find out more about different infant feeding options, see the resource [Ways to Feed a Baby](#) on the Trans Care BC website.

Have you thought about how you are going to feed your baby?

Do you have any questions about feeding your baby?

How is your baby arriving? How much time do you have before they arrive? Options for infant feeding are different if your baby is arriving after pregnancy, surrogacy, or adoption. If you are planning to induce lactation, this process can start months before your baby arrives.

What is important to you about feeding your baby? Only you can decide what your infant feeding priorities are, though you can make this decision together with others, like your partner(s) or chosen family. For instance, is it important to you that your baby receives human milk? Or that more than one person can bodyfeed or feed from a bottle?

What stories have you been told about feeding babies? Has this impacted how you think about infant feeding? In many cultures, infant feeding is seen as a feminine activity that excludes men and non-binary people. Some people grew up in families and communities where infant feeding was uncomplicated, while others heard little about infant feeding or mostly heard stories of feeding difficulties. These stories can impact how you think about infant feeding, and, once you identify them, you can question whether or not they are helpful to inform your own feeding plans.

Do you have any cultural beliefs or practices that may inform your feeding decisions?

Have you fed a baby before? If yes, what did you enjoy about this experience? What would you change if you could?

Are you planning to parent alone or with one or more partners or support people? If yes, will they be available anytime you need them? Do they live with you? Do they work away from home?

If you are parenting by yourself, do you have a support person you can call if you need help? Having a support person or people is important for everyone with a new baby. For some infants, or with certain feeding methods, you might need hands-on help for most feedings early on.

Do you have any medical conditions that may impact your ability to bodyfeed an infant? Are you taking any medications on a regular basis? Most medications are compatible with bodyfeeding or feeding human milk but some have special considerations or alternatives that would be safer. Make note of any medications, conditions, or concerns that you would like to discuss or plan for with your care team.

Do you have any questions about how body modifications or gender-affirming treatments may impact bodyfeeding?

This may include chest binding, piercings, hormone therapy, or surgeries.

What excites you about feeding your baby?

What worries you about feeding your baby?

Is cost a concern when thinking about how to feed your baby? Every feeding method will have a direct or indirect financial impact. For example, taking time off work to bodyfeed, buying medications and renting a pump to induce lactation, or buying formula or donor milk.

If bodyfeeding required a significant time and energy commitment, would it be worth it to you? Why or why not?

Most people can provide some amount of human milk for their infants. For some, this might involve using a supplemental feeding system, providing extra milk or formula after every bodyfeed, or pumping after feedings. These steps will require extra time and energy and may or may not be worth it for you.

When you think about feeding your baby in public, are you concerned about your comfort or safety? These concerns may shift based on where you are and who you are with. For some, a desire for privacy will influence their feeding choices.

How would you like to feed your baby? In an ideal world, how would you feed your baby? Who would help you? What do you need to achieve this goal?

Inspiration for this document was taken from [Deciding How to Feed Your Baby](#) (Alberta Health Services, 2018).

A similar resource is available from [Perinatal Services BC](#).

Any errors within this document belong solely to Trans Care BC.

For more information, visit transcarebc.ca



This document is designed for informational purposes only and should not be taken as medical advice. Please discuss any ongoing questions or concerns with your health care team.