

The 24-hr Cure for Breastfed Babies & their Mothers

During the first few weeks after birth, the mother and baby are perfecting the art of breastfeeding. Occasionally they may experience problems or setbacks that can be solved by using what is known as the 24-Hour Cure.

What is the 24-Hour Cure?

The 24-Hour Cure is the name given to a treatment advised for a number of breastfeeding problems. In essence, it involves mom and baby spending 24 hours in bed together. The forced rest and constant skin-to-skin contact has a dual purpose:

- To nurture the MOTHER by giving her complete rest, plenty of good food and drink, and freedom from all responsibility other than feeding and fondling her baby
- To nurture the BABY, by encouraging prolonged skin-to-skin contact with the mother and constant access to her breast



What problems can be addressed by the 24-Hour Cure?

The 24-Hour Cure can solve a number of breastfeeding problems, such as the following:

- Doubts about whether the mother is making enough milk
- Fatigue, lack of sleep or anxiety in the mother
- Lack of appetite, poor nourishment or low fluid intake by the mother
- Slow weight gain or weight loss by the baby
- “Nipple confusion” – that is, the baby seems to prefer an artificial nipple or nipple shield to the mother’s breast
- Plugged ducts
- Mastitis, if fever has not lasted for more than 24 hours yet

When should I not do the 24-Hour Cure?

It is important that the mother not have sore, blistered or cracked nipples when she begins the cure. The causes for the soreness need to be addressed before starting the cure.

How to do the 24-Hour Cure:

1. Organize a full 24 hours when the mother can have help. Help is essential!
2. Mama goes to bed with the baby. They both wear as little clothing as possible under the bedcovers so the baby can get lots of warm skin-to-skin contact, which heightens the baby’s rooting reflex and interest in feeding.

3. No visitors please! Mama may read, watch television, or most importantly, doze. The extra sleep makes a big difference even though it comes in short snatches.
4. Mama gets out of bed only to go the bathroom – not to eat, answer the phone, do housework or anything else.
5. Mama is supplied with liquids; place water or juice within her reach. She should drink about two litres of liquid during the 24 hours.
6. Tasty, nutritious meals are used to tempt mama's appetite. A good milk supply is dependent on eating a healthy amount of calories.
7. The baby should stay in bed with mama, except when a diaper change is necessary, or when the baby is fussy (and clearly not willing to nurse) and needs to be walked or rocked.
8. Whenever the baby awakens or seems at all interested in suckling, mama offers the breast. The whole process is to get the baby to suckle as much as possible. Do NOT give the baby a bottle of either formula or breast milk, unless advised by your midwife for medical reasons such as severe weight loss.
9. There is no reason to not extend into a 48-Hour Cure if results are promising after 24-Hours!