

Information for breastfeeding families

Breastfeeding in the Hospital



Getting the best start, right in the hospital in the first few days of your baby's life, is key to long-term breastfeeding.

Talk to your obstetrician during your pregnancy so he/she is aware of your wishes. Talk to your labor nurse when you arrive at the hospital to assure that she knows your wishes and can help you when the time arrives. Talk to your pediatrician in a prenatal consultation so he/she can follow-up with your ideal plan.

First, ask that your baby be put on your tummy right after delivery

- Hold your baby skin to skin and watch him crawl up to the breast for his first feeding. This may happen from 10 to 40 minutes after birth.
- Keep your baby skin-to-skin until he has fed for the first time.
- Delay the eye treatment, first weight, newborn injections and other procedures that are common right after delivery until the first feeding is finished.
- If you give birth by cesarean-section, your partner can hold your baby skin-to-skin until you are able to hold him and breastfeed.

Second, keep your baby right with you at all times (rooming-in)

- If you are moved from the delivery area to the maternity area after the birth is over, hold your baby skin-to-skin during this transfer. Cover you both with blankets.

- Your baby can't breastfeed in the hospital nursery. Keep your baby with you so you can respond easily and quickly every time he shows feeding cues.
- Feed your baby 8-14 times each 24 hour day. It seems like a lot, allow your baby to tell you how hungry he is.
- Look for feeding cues:
 - Waking up, becoming agitated
 - Rooting (turning his head and opening his mouth)
 - Licking, smacking, mouthing movements
 - Sucking on fingers or fist
 - Crying is the last cue, don't wait for that!
- Continue holding your baby skin-to-skin, before feedings, after feedings, whenever your baby is upset.

Avoid unnecessary supplementation

- Feeding right after birth assures that your baby gets a nice big feeding right away. Then offer the breast often.
- If you are unsure your baby is breastfeeding properly, ask for help! Your nurse can give you pointers and if you need more assistance, ask to see the Lactation Consultant.

Feel free to duplicate Lactation Education Resources

Please be aware that the information provided is intended solely for general educational and informational purposes only. It is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your physician for any questions you may have regarding your or your infant's medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have received in this information.