

# Prepare for Breastfeeding



Breastfeeding is natural; you just need patience and practice for you and your baby to get the hang of it. It's worth the effort because your breastmilk is perfect food your body makes specifically for your baby's nutritional needs and optimal growth.

Prep for breastfeeding while you're pregnant. Advice from nurses at Health4Mom.org reveals what's ahead, how to avoid common problems and how to nurse or provide breastmilk even if your baby is born prematurely.

Start breastfeeding right after baby's birth and you and your baby will have the greatest likelihood of sharing the special bond of nursing for as long as you both desire.

## BUILD YOUR SUPPORT TEAM

Ask your nurse about breastfeeding classes, lactation specialists and groups where moms share experiences and gain support while nursing. Ask supportive friends and family about their breastfeeding experiences:

- ✿ What made nursing easy for them?
- ✿ What was difficult?
- ✿ How can you prevent similar problems?
- ✿ Can you call them for support?



## READY, SET, NURSE

Equip yourself for breastfeeding. Your insurance plan likely provides for a breast pump and nursing supplies; check your benefits. Breastfeeding is free. Experienced moms say these tools make continuing breastmilk feeding easier:

- ✿ **Nursing bras and clothing** offer support and easy access for baby
- ✿ **Nursing pads** absorb any milk that may leak
- ✿ **Nursing pillows** bolster and help position baby
- ✿ **A breast pump** helps you store and feed breastmilk. Set up your pump before baby's birth; ask nurses for tips for pumping your milk
- ✿ **Bottles, storage bags, and warmers** help provide your baby breastmilk if you have to be apart. Plan to nurse, pump, store, and feed baby only breastmilk during the first 6 months



Breastfeeding is healthy best and saves families \$1,500 a year compared to formula feeding.

## COMMON MYTHS

- ▶ My baby wants to eat so often that I must not be making enough milk.
- ▶ I'll get less sleep if I breastfeed.
- ▶ My breasts are the wrong size to make enough milk.



## BUSTED!

- ▶ Newborns eat frequently from birth because their stomach is very small. Breastmilk digests quick and easy. Day 1 your baby's stomach is the size of a cherry; day 3 the size of a walnut; and by day 5, an apricot.
- ▶ Breastfeeding leads to more sleep for you and baby. Formula-fed babies sleep less and are fussier. Research shows moms of formula-fed babies can lose up to 45 minutes of sleep a day compared to moms who nurse!
- ▶ You can make plenty of milk; breast size has nothing to do with the quantity or quality of your milk.

# Begin Breastfeeding: You, Baby & Your Nurses



The first hour after birth is the best time to begin breastfeeding. Your nurses have the expertise and clinical skills to help you and baby get off to the best possible start with nursing. Ask them to:

- 1 **Place baby skin-to-skin with you at birth**, even after cesarean
- 2 **Help you guide baby to breast** as he or she begins to root, acting on natural instincts to feed
- 3 **Point out baby's hunger cues** so you can meet baby's appetite with breastmilk
- 4 **Show you how to pump and feed breastmilk if baby is premature** or needs extra care apart from you

## LEARN BABY'S HUNGER CUES

Most babies are alert and awake for the first couple hours after birth, especially if you didn't have any pain medication in labor. Your little one is eager to cuddle and eat; she'll let you know when she:

- ✿ Smacks her lips
- ✿ Sticks out her tongue
- ✿ Moves her head from side to side (rooting reflex)
- ✿ Licks or puckers her lips
- ✿ Puts hands to mouth
- ✿ Cries, although this is a late hunger sign

Moms who exclusively nurse baby from birth through their hospital stay tend to have the greatest success breastfeeding.



## ( Keep Baby Near You )

The more time you and baby spend together the better you will get to know each other and the more likely you'll start and continue nursing. Keep baby near you while she sleeps so she can feed every 2-3 hours, whether she wakes or if you rouse her to eat. Research shows moms don't sleep longer or better when their infants are in the nursery.



Rooming with baby, you can expect your nurses will:

- ✿ **Regularly check on you**, answer questions and help with feeding and infant care
- ✿ **Show you nursing positions**, such as the cradle, cross-cradle and football holds. Moms recovering from cesarean like the football hold as there's no pressure on your abdomen.

### Baby is getting enough milk when...

- ✿ Your breast softens after baby feeds
- ✿ You see and hear baby swallow
- ✿ Baby relaxes while eating



Nurses share more advice on breastfeeding baby at [Health4Mom.org](http://Health4Mom.org)