

BREASTFEEDING YOUR BABY



All our hospitals support the **Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative**. This means that we support and encourage exclusive breast feeding for 6 months. We do not use baby bottles or teats. Your baby will only receive formula if for a medical reason in you or the baby. No breast-feeding baby will receive a dummy.

We **highly recommend** breast feeding as it is the best milk for your baby. It is free, provides protection from infection (like gastro enteritis) and childhood illnesses, has all the right ingredients & is the correct temperature. It provides all the nutrition your baby needs for at least the 1st 6 months. Your baby will grow and develop best if you breast feed.

Please ask for help if you are having any difficulties or concerns while you are here.

GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL BREASTFEEDING:

- Ensure you are well rested and eating and drinking well. You must drink 2 liters of water every day. Ensure you have a balanced diet with lots of fresh fruit and vegetables. If you are stressed or sick this can decrease your milk supply. Your family needs to support and encourage you in your efforts as it can be frustrating as you and your baby learn this new skill.

- **White Gold!** For the first 3 days you will have small amounts of **colostrum**. This appears slightly thin and watery but contains large amounts of antibodies to protect your baby. This is all the baby needs initially and is very important. If your baby isn't able to suck it is important to express and feed this to your baby.
- From the 4th day your breasts should fill as your milk "comes in"

LATCHING YOUR BABY:

- It is important that you are comfortable and relaxed when you are breast feeding. Support your arm on a pillow if necessary. You may like to sit or lie down.
- Your baby should show signs that he is ready to feed:
 - ◆ Fists moving to mouth.
 - ◆ Head turning to look for the breast.
 - ◆ Becoming more alert and active.
 - ◆ Sucking on hands or lip smacking.
 - ◆ Opening and closing mouth
- Ensure the baby opens his mouth wide, that his tongue is at the bottom of his mouth and that he takes the nipple **and** areola (brown part around the nipple) into his mouth in order for him to latch properly.

FEEDING YOUR BABY:

- Alternate which breast you start feeding with. as it generally gets emptied quickly. Baby takes +/-90% of the feed in the first 5 minutes. The fore milk is thin and watery but there is lots of it of it. The hindmilk is rich and good for the baby and comes at the end of the feed. Baby shouldn't suck for longer than +/- 20 mins. Baby should feed on demand every 3 to 6 hours but may want more frequent feeds on occasion. If he is lethargic or crying constantly take him to the clinic as there might be a problem.
- Wind your baby ½ way through the breastfeed and again at the end of the feed.

Hold your baby against your shoulder and gently pat his/her back. If after 5 minutes your baby has not "burped" he/she has probably not swallowed any air.

- Break the suction of sucking by putting your finger in his mouth, before removing your baby from the breast as this helps prevent sore or cracked nipples

SUCCESSFUL FEEDING:

- You know that your baby is getting enough milk if he settles well afterwards and is passing about 6-8 wet nappies every day.
- Your baby's bowels should act at least once a day with a soft yellow inoffensive stool but having up to 8 stools per day or even one stool every week is normal in breast feeding babies. If the stool becomes watery or blood stained –see a doctor.
- Your baby should be gaining weight in line with the road to health card.
- Your breasts should feel full before and empty after a feed.

PROBLEMS WITH FEEDING:

- If you have twins you can feed them both at once. Hold each one under your arms with the heads in your hands facing your breasts.
- If your breasts become engorged (swollen and hard) they have too much milk. Cabbage leaves can be put on them to help draw the milk or take a hot shower and massage them with a warm facecloth. Express some milk before breast feeding to soften the breasts, make them less painful and to allow the baby to latch more easily.
- If your nipples become cracked, reposition the baby so he is not sucking on the sore area. Applying colostrum or hindmilk can help them heal quickly.
- If you have blood or pus coming out the nipple or have a temperature please go to the clinic or see a doctor as you might have an abscess.

Feeding your sick baby



When your baby is sick or premature he will not be ready to start breast feeding. You will be asked to express your milk and feed it to your baby through a tube which is placed via the nose into the stomach.

EXPRESSING BREASTMILK:

Because breast milk is the best milk for babies, we ask that you express your milk every 3 hours so that we can store it and give it to your baby as needed. Your breasts should fill with milk by day 3. Even if your baby is not yet feeding or has stopped feeding it is important to continue to express every 3 hours and start as soon as possible after delivery to ensure your milk supply does not dry up!

- Position your thumb above the nipple and your fingers below the nipple about 1-2 inches behind your nipple.
- Press your fingers and thumb back toward your chest.
- Gently compress your fingers and thumb together.
- Release and then repeat in a rhythmic pattern: Press, Compress, Release.
- Change position of the fingers around the nipple to express milk from different ducts.
- Think about your baby or smell a piece of your baby's clothing to help the milk to flow.
- Tension or anxiety can prevent your milk from flowing well.
- Do not squeeze hard or pull on the nipple. Hand expression should not hurt.

- Remember to drink at least 8 glasses of water every day, to rest and to eat at least 3 meals a day to stop your breast milk from drying up. Ask the nurses for support if you have very little milk.
- Please do not ask other mothers to express for you as it is not good for your baby to receive milk from another mother.

TUBE FEEDING:

- You baby should always be fed skin to skin on your chest. Your baby should be able to sniff and suckle at your breast while you feed him.
- Check that the tube is in the right place before every feed using litmus paper. Make sure the tube is strapped securely and has not moved since the last feed.
- You can hold the tube while the milk runs in **slowly**.
- Give the exact amount of milk the doctor has ordered. Giving more or less can make your baby sick and your baby wont grow well.
- When your baby has grown and is stronger your baby will show signs that he is ready for breastfeeding. The nurses will guide in slowly moving from tube feeds to breast feeds.

GOING HOME:

- Your baby must be breast feeding before you can go home.
- Once you are at home visit the well baby clinic every week /month and the sisters will weigh your baby to see that he is growing and getting enough milk.
- Speak to them if you have any questions or problems as they can help, support and advise you.
- We would encourage you to form a breast feeding support group with other mothers who live near you before you leave or when you get home.

CUP / BOTTLE FEEDING

Before discharge, if you are returning to work or school and cannot breast feed, or have safely chosen not to



breast feed, the nurses will teach you how to cup feed your baby. You will not be able to bottle /formula feed while in hospital.

We strongly encourage you to express your milk and give this via cup and not give formula. Bottles are difficult to clean so you should use cups instead. Formula feeds are not the best for your baby and are expensive.

Gastro enteritis **kills many babies** every year and is usually caused by infection from incorrectly washed bottles or poorly prepared feeds!

If you do choose to use formula and bottles please take note of the following:

- Always **wash your hands** before making bottles.
- **Boil** all your bottles and teats in water for at least 10 minutes. Allow to dry thoroughly.
- Use water that has boiled for 3 minutes to pour into the bottles. Allow to cool.
- Always put the boiled water into the bottle first, and then the formula.
- Once the formula has been mixed it must be refrigerated and will last only 24 hours.
- Check the bottle teats regularly to ensure that they are not torn as your baby may choke on a piece.
- Use the right amount of formula for the amount of water (1 scoop into 25mls of water). Never decrease or increase the amount of formula! Read instructions on the tin or check with the clinic if unsure. If you only put enough formula into the water to turn it white, the baby will get sick.
- Do not use your baby's formula instead of milk for other members of the family e.g. in tea or porridge.
- Always "wind" your baby. They generally swallow more air than breast fed babies.
- Do not give your baby ordinary cows milk until he is a year old as it does not contain the nutrition he needs.