

Breastfeeding Right after Birth



Provide lots of skin-to-skin contact

Ask your doctor or midwife to place your baby on your abdomen immediately after birth. Your baby will instinctively move towards your breast for his first feeding. Skin-to-skin holding helps your baby regulate his temperature, heart rate, and breathing. Any routine procedures that need to be done can be done while your baby is nestled near your breast. It doesn't count if either you or your baby wears a t-shirt or nightgown; your baby must be in skin-to-skin contact with you (read our handout "skin-to-skin contact". Watch "the breast crawl" on the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qyPKzD6brc>).

Position your baby comfortably on your chest

Babies usually assume a face down position. This position is perfect as it allows him to look for the breast. Provide a little gentle guidance if needed.



Feed your baby early

Begin breastfeeding within the first hour after delivery. This is the optimal time to start. Let your baby crawl to the breast and find it with only minimal help from you. He can do it! Keep your baby skin-to-skin with you until you have completed the first feeding. Your baby will be ready and willing!



Massage your breasts

Massaging your breast will increase the milk flow to your baby. Massage from the outer edges towards your nipple. This will move colostrum into your nipple. Then give your breast a gentle squeeze.

Your baby is very sensitive to smells

Your baby will know you by your scent. Gently wipe away any fluids from his skin, but delay the first bath for 24 hours or until after several feedings to allow your baby to "know you by your scent." Let breastfeeding get off to a good start before others hold your baby.

If supplements are necessary

Occasionally there are medical reasons to give the baby a supplement. If he needs a supplement for medical reasons, give only 5-10 ml. Continue to hold him in skin-to-skin contact and encourage him to feed again as soon as he shows interest.

Moving to the postnatal ward

Wrap both you and your baby together to maintain skin-to-skin contact while you are moved from labor and delivery to the postnatal ward. Then keep your baby with you throughout the day and the night so you can respond quickly when your baby shows signs of wanting to feed. Read our handout "Starting up Breastfeeding" for more information.

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 medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have received in this program.

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