

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 health care providers during your pregnancy so they are 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.



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

- Hold skin to skin and watch your baby crawl up to the breast for the first feeding. This may happen from 10 to 40 minutes after birth.
- Keep your baby skin-to-skin until the first feeding.
- 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 initiate breastfeeding. Some hospitals will do skin-to-skin even right after cesarean. Ask.



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 you see feeding cues.
- Feed your baby at least 8 times each 24 hour day on demand.
- Look for feeding cues:
 - // Waking up, becoming agitated
 - // Rooting (turning head and opening 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, and 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.