

CAN I BREASFEED MY PREMATURE BABY?

Even the smallest premature babies benefit from their mother's milk—even if only small amounts are fed for short periods of time. Providing breast milk helps develop a special connection or closeness between you and your baby when separated in the NICU. Mothers who deliver a premature baby produce milk especially beneficial for premature babies and provides extra protection against some of the problems that premature babies may develop. However, breastfeeding a premature baby who is in the NICU can be challenging. Premature babies can be fed expressed breast milk and/or special formula through a special tube. The breast milk may be fortified with a special human milk fortifier to increase the energy in it. Once you give birth, you will need to remove milk from your breasts early, often, and completely, so that your body gets the sign to produce enough milk. The first 2 – 4 weeks are especially important. During this period your milk-producing hormones and breast tissues undergo changes that help ensure your ability to produce enough milk for your baby in the weeks and months to come.

QUESTIONS?

YOU ARE WELCOME TO ASK ME AT ANY TIME IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS. WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU AND MAKE THIS PROCESS AS EASY AS POSSIBLE.



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BREASTFEEDING YOUR NEWBORN



WHY BREASTMILK?

- YOUR BREASTMILK HAS JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF FAT, SUGAR, WATER, AND PROTEIN NEEDED FOR A BABY'S DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH. MOST BABIES FIND IT EASIER TO DIGEST BREAST MILK THAN FORMULA.
- BREAST MILK HAS PROTEINS CALLED ANTIBODIES THAT HELP PROTECT YOUR BABY FROM BACTERIA AND VIRUSES. BABIES WHO ARE BREASTFED FOR SIX MONTHS ARE LESS LIKELY TO HAVE EAR INFECTIONS, DIARRHEA, OR RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES.
- BREASTFEEDING USES UP EXTRA CALORIES, MAKING IT EASIER TO LOSE WEIGHT AFTER PREGNANCY. IT ALSO DECREASES ANY BLEEDING A WOMAN MAY HAVE AFTER GIVING BIRTH. • BREASTFEEDING DELAYS THE RETURN OF NORMAL OVULATION AND MENSTRUAL CYCLES. (YOU SHOULD STILL TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR OR NURSE ABOUT BIRTH CONTROL CHOICES.)
- BREASTFEEDING LOWERS THE RISK OF BREAST AND OVARIAN CANCERS.
- BREASTFEEDING SAVES TIME AND MONEY.

HOW DO I START?

PROVIDED YOUR BABY IS BIG AND WELL ENOUGH, THE BEST TIME TO BEGIN BREASTFEEDING IS ALMOST RIGHT AFTER YOUR BABY IS BORN. YOUR BABY IS USUALLY VERY ALERT RIGHT AFTER BIRTH, AND WHEN PLACED ON YOUR CHEST, THE BABY MAY MOVE TO YOUR BREAST AND BEGIN SUCKING. DO NOT WORRY IF YOU CANNOT BREASTFEED YOUR BABY RIGHT AFTER BIRTH. MOST BABIES HAVE NO DIFFICULTY LATCHING ON EVEN IF BREASTFEEDING IS DELAYED



STAGES (TYPES) OF BREASTMILK



WHEN YOUR BABY IS BORN, AND FOR 3 TO 4 DAYS AFTERWARD, YOUR BREASTS PRODUCE A FORM OF MILK CALLED COLOSTRUM, WHICH IS THICKER THAN REGULAR BREAST MILK. THIS FIRST MILK CONTAINS ALL THE NUTRIENTS YOUR NEWBORN NEEDS FOR THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF LIFE, IN THE PERFECT AMOUNT. IT ALSO HELPS PROTECT YOUR BABY FROM INFECTION.

ONCE YOUR MILK SUPPLY INCREASES (USUALLY BY DAY 3 OR 4, THE INITIAL WATERY MILK AT THE START OF THE FEED IS FOREMILK, GREAT FOR QUENCHING THIRST AND RICH IN ANTIBODIES.

THE THICK CREAMY, CALORIE RICH HINDMILK USUALLY FLOWS AFTER ABOUT 20 MINUTES OF A FEED, AND WILL KEEP YOUR NABY FULL, AND CHUBBY!