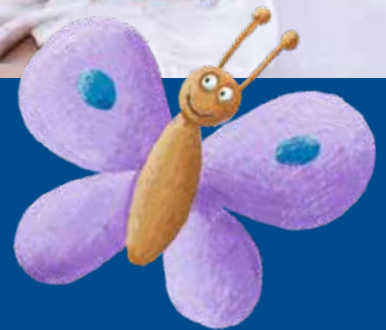




Your Guide to
Breastfeeding



HOWARD COUNTY
GENERAL HOSPITAL

JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICINE

Your Guide to Breastfeeding



Dear Expectant Mother,



As you plan for your baby's arrival, the following information will be useful in helping you to prepare to breastfeed your baby and begin the journey of new life together.

The staff at Howard County General Hospital (HCGH) is committed to making your first days with your new baby a wonderful experience. This includes helping all new mothers achieve breastfeeding success.

Breastfeeding is a learned skill, and the staff of the Maternal-Child Unit and our lactation consultants will be there to support you every step of the way.

Benefits of Breastfeeding

...for Baby

- Human milk is custom-designed for human babies. It provides all the nutrition, antibodies and disease protection your baby needs for the healthiest start in life. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for six months, followed by continued breastfeeding for one year or longer as complementary foods are introduced. There is no need for any other food for the first six months of life, unless there are medical reasons.

- Breastfeeding provides lifelong benefits and protection against many diseases including diabetes, obesity and asthma.
- Breast milk is easier to digest than formula.

Recent research suggests babies who are breastfed may have:

- lower rates of pneumonia, ear infections and SIDS.
- less constipation and less diarrhea.
- improved intelligence scores.

...for Mother

Recent research shows:

- Women who breastfeed have a lower risk of developing breast cancer, Type 2 diabetes, ovarian cancer, heart disease, osteoporosis and postpartum depression.
- Breastfeeding helps new moms return to pre-pregnancy weight faster.
- Breastfeeding is cost-effective. Formula is expensive. Breast milk is free.
- Breast milk requires no preparation. There are no bottles or nipples to clean and sterilize nor formula to mix, and it is available whenever you need it.

- Breastfeeding is a special way to bond with your baby, but it can be challenging in the first few days. Fortunately, breastfeeding releases a hormone called oxytocin that not only helps milk flow but relaxes and calms you.



Skin-to-skin

Cherishing Your First Moments Together

Skin-to-skin contact is the best way to welcome your newborn. It helps your baby feel safe and calm as well as begins the bonding experience. We encourage you to keep your baby skin-to-skin as much as possible the first few days and continue through the next few weeks. Partners can do skin-to-skin too.

Benefits of skin-to-skin include:

- Calms baby
- Relaxes mom
- Decreases stress of birth
- Helps mother produce milk
- Keeps baby warm
- Promotes brain development
- Easier to tell when baby is hungry
- Stabilizes baby's blood sugar, breathing and heartbeat
- Makes breastfeeding easier
- Empowers mom



Rooming-In

Supports Bonding and Breastfeeding

At HCGH, babies and moms remain together throughout the hospital stay. We want to help you learn about your baby, bond and achieve successful breastfeeding. Our staff will care for you and your baby in the comfort of your private room. You and your baby will only be separated for medical procedures that cannot be performed in your room or when medical observation is necessary.

Rooming-in provides additional benefits:

- Baby learns to recognize mother
- New moms begin to recognize and understand baby's feeding cues
- Babies sleep better and experience less stress and crying when near their mother
- Mother sleeps better too
- Breast milk comes in sooner
- Baby feeds more often, improving milk supply, newborn health and comfort
- Babies gain weight better and experience less jaundice
- Mothers breastfeed longer and more exclusively
- Dads/partners can bond with baby and provide additional support for moms
- Parents feel more confident in caring for baby
- Parents can interact with medical staff and participate in baby's care and check-ups which are performed with the parents in the room

Beginning the Breastfeeding Journey

Breastfeeding is a natural process but also a learned skill for you and your baby. The staff of the Maternal-Child Unit and our lactation consultants will be there to support you. Every baby is different and so is every breastfeeding experience.

- Skin-to-skin contact immediately after your baby is born is the best way to begin the experience of breastfeeding your baby.
- Breastfeed your baby as soon as possible after you give birth, when your baby is wide awake. Breastfeeding now takes advantage of high levels of oxytocin, the hormone that helps milk flow and causes the uterus to contract, decreasing bleeding.
- Ask for help. Our nurses and lactation consultants will be there to support you as you begin to feed your baby.
- Breastfeed often. Feeding your baby 8 to 12 times a day will ensure that you are making plenty of milk.
- Learn and follow your baby's feeding cues. Rooming-in will help you recognize the first signs that your baby is ready to feed.

Offer the breast as soon as baby shows hunger cues:

- Rapid eye movements (fluttery eye movements while eyes are closed)
- Increased alertness or activity
- Rooting: turning toward the breast and opening mouth as though to feed or when a touch on the cheek results in your baby turning toward the touch
- Hands to mouth, or sucking on own hand
- Your baby does not have to cry to let you know they are hungry. Crying is a late feeding cue.

Babies often give frequent feeding cues for milk. Frequent feeding places the order with mom's body for lots of milk. Your baby will need to eat 8 or more times in 24 hours to feel settled and content. Small, frequent feeds ensure a good milk supply. The more baby consumes, the more breast milk you will make.

Tips to keep your breastfeeding on track:

- Do not supplement breast milk with formula or other supplements, unless medically necessary. Unnecessary supplementing can reduce milk supply.
- Feed only breast milk for 6 months. No water or solid foods are needed
- Avoid using bottles and pacifiers that can interfere with latching and make breastfeeding more challenging.
- If supplements are medically necessary, talk to your nurse or lactation consultant about using alternative methods such as a spoon, syringe or cup to feed your baby.



Learning to Latch

A good latch is very important for effective breastfeeding and may take time, practice and patience for mom and baby.

Our lactation specialists offer these tips:

- To begin, hold your baby close with baby's tummy facing your tummy.
- Make sure to bring baby to breast, not breast to baby.
- Have one hand supporting your baby's neck and shoulders and use your other hand to support the breast behind the areola.
- Start with your baby's nose close to the nipple.
- Stroke downward with your nipple across your baby's lips to encourage them to open their mouth.
- Wait until your baby's mouth is open wide and gently pull baby's shoulders toward your breast with the head tilted back slightly to make it easy to suck, swallow and breathe.
- Baby should take a big mouthful of breast, not just the nipple, to ensure your baby gets more milk and so you don't feel any discomfort.



Breastfeeding Positions



A good latch feels comfortable. The first moment might be slightly uncomfortable.

- If you feel discomfort for more than a minute, remove your baby and re-latch. Consult with your nurse if you continue to have discomfort throughout the entire feeding.
- To remove your baby from the breast, break the suction first by sliding a clean finger between your nipple and your baby's gums.

Proper positioning and latching:

- Ensures baby gets enough milk
- Helps build milk supply
- Prevents nipple soreness







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