

# Breastfeeding

## BENEFITS – WHY BREASTFEED?

Human milk and infant formula are different. Not only does human milk provide all the protein, sugar, fat and vitamins your baby needs to be healthy, but it has special benefits that formulas cannot match. It helps protect your baby against certain diseases and infections. Because of the protective substances in human milk, breastfed children are less likely to develop the following:

- Ear Infections – 3 times less likely
- Allergies and Eczema – 2 to 7 times less likely
- Vomiting and Diarrhea – 3 times less likely
- Pneumonia, wheezing, and bronchiolitis – 1.7 to 5 times less likely
- Meningitis - 3.8 times less likely
- Urinary Tract Infections – 2.6 to 5.5 times less likely
- Diabetes – 2.4 times less likely
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) – 2 times less likely
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease – 1.5 to 1.9 times less likely
- Hodgkin's Lymphoma – 1 to 6.7 times less likely

Other reasons why human milk is good for your child include the following:

- It is easier for babies to digest.
- It does not need to be prepared.
- It costs nothing to make and is always in supply.
- It is even good for the environment since there are no bottles, cans and boxes to put in the garbage.

- Breastfeeding also provides physical contact, warmth and closeness, which help to create a special bond between a mother and her baby.

There are also many health benefits for you because breastfeeding does the following:

- Burns more calories and helps you get back to your pre-pregnancy weight more quickly (additional 300-1000 calories/dy)
- Reduces the risk of ovarian cancer and, in premenopausal women, breast cancer.
- Builds bone strength to protect against bone fractures in older age.
- Delays the return of your menstrual period, which may help extend the time between pregnancies. (Keep in mind that breastfeeding alone will not prevent pregnancy.)
- Helps the uterus return to its regular size more quickly.

## **GETTING STARTED**

Immediately after delivery, your baby should be placed on your chest or abdomen, skin to skin. Babies are very alert after they are born, and they are usually hungry, too! Your baby's first feeding should take place within 30 minutes to an hour after delivery. The protection against infection that human milk provides is important immediately after birth. Your milk will also give the baby nutrients to prevent a low blood sugar level. This early taste of your milk also stimulates the baby to nurse better later. The yellowish milk that your baby gets immediately after delivery is called colostrum, and is high in nutrients and antibodies.

For the first few feedings – the cross-cradle or football hold are usually the best, as you can position the baby correctly, watch to ensure a correct latch, and keep the baby awake easier.

- Hold your baby in the cross-cradle position, with the head in the opposite hand of the breast you are nursing off of. Firmly support the baby's back and buttocks. When feeding this way, make sure your baby's entire body is facing your body, not the ceiling. You should be belly to belly, with the baby's arms encompassing your breast.



- Use a side sitting or "football" hold – your baby's belly should be against your side, with the head in the same hand as the breast you are nursing off of.



- Sit up using one or two extra pillows to support your baby.

Always take time to make yourself comfortable. Do not be shy about asking for help during the first few feedings. Just as with learning anything new, it may take several feedings before you and your baby become a skilled nursing team. Practice getting your baby to the breast, it can take up to 2 weeks to get comfortable with nursing.

Latch – a good latch is imperative to breastfeeding successively. Start by rubbing your nipple on the side of the baby’s mouth, getting your baby to open his or her mouth as wide as possible. Quickly bring the baby’s mouth to your breast, with as much of the entire areola as possible inside the mouth. Do not let your baby latch only on the nipple, as it will not allow for sufficient milk transfer, and will cause your nipples to be sore and painful. Make sure that your baby’s lower lip is out, and not tucked in. You should be comfortable, see the baby’s chin moving, and hear swallows.

If at any time you are uncomfortable or unsure about nursing, please do not hesitate to ask your pediatrician. Your pediatrician should be comfortable answering most questions, and if necessary, can refer you to a breast-feeding specialist or lactation consultant. Most lactation consultants will be available to you at the hospital you delivered at – to reach St. Elizabeth Hospital lactation department, call (859) 301-2631 or (859) 301-BABY.

## **MILK STORAGE**

Once your baby has started on a bottle, the entire contents of the bottle should be discarded after 1 hour. Breast milk may be stored in closed containers for the following duration:

- Room Temperature – 6 hours
- Refrigerator – 7 days
- Freezer – 3 months
- Deep Freezer – 12 months

## WAYS TO INCREASE MILK SUPPLY

1. Nurse frequently (every 2-3 hrs minimum) – supply/demand
2. Drink plenty of fluids and try to rest
3. Limit caffeine and nicotine exposure
4. Prescription Medication – please discuss with your Pediatrician – Reglan
5. Herbal Supplements
  - Fenugreek – works within 24-72 hrs, dose varies (usually 2 capsules 4x/dy to 3 capsules 3x/dy); side effects for mother – urine and sweat smell like maple syrup, loose stools, hypoglycemia, uterine contractions (contraindicated in pregnancy), can also lower blood sugar and cholesterol in mother
  - Blessed Thistle – to make tea, pour boiling water over 1.5 to 2 gms of crushed Blessed Thistle and steep for 5-10 minutes. Drink 1 cup a ½ hour before meals. No scientific evidence to support increased milk supply.
  - Fennel – safe when in form of seeds or fruit from fennel plant, do not take in oil for fennel plant. No scientific evidence to support increased milk supply.

Adapted from multiple AAP and AAFM journals and articles in May 2010 by Dr. Amanda Dropic