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Obstetrics & Gynecology

How to Successfully Breastfeed

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Learning to breastfeed starts as early as the beginning of pregnancy, but it is never too late!

When is the best time to learn breastfeeding? NOW NOW NOW

When and how to start breastfeeding?

Start breastfeeding as soon as the baby is born.

Have the baby and mother do Skin to Skin as much as possible.

Assess the mother's nipple – ask for lactation consult if mother has inverted nipple.

Mother and Baby position

Start with whichever position is comfortable for both mother and the baby.

How to Latch?

Line up the nipple to the baby's nose, so chin touches the breast first (below the areola).

When baby's mouth is wide open bring the baby to the breast. The underside of the areola enters the mouth first and the nipple last (to avoid pain). Support the baby's neck/shoulder and not the head to assist with breastfeeding.

Not enough milk???

First milk is colostrum which is watery, clear and/or yellow. It is rich in immune factors that protect the baby against serious infections. This gradually changes to mature milk over the first week. The volume of the milk increases from just a few teaspoons on the first day to a few ounces in the next few days.

How to ensure good milk supply?

Early and frequent pain free breastfeedings (minimum 8- 12 feeds/day)

As the baby sucks on the breast (without pain) the mother's hormones are stimulated to make more milk.

NOTE: If baby does not "fill up", offer more frequent painfree breastfeedings. This will ensure a good milk supply.

How often should the baby breastfeed?

Feed the baby whenever the baby shows the following cues: increased alertness, sticking the tongue out, hand to mouth, and or rooting. Crying is a late sign of hunger. In the first few weeks of life a non-demanding baby should be aroused to feed at least 4 hours after the last feed.

How long should the baby breastfeed each time?

Breastfeed on the first side until the baby falls asleep or pulls off the breast as long as it is not painful. (If painful, break the latch and restart with good latch again). Then take the baby off the first breast, wake the baby and offer the second side. Next time start breastfeeding with the second side first.

NOTE: Watch the baby, not so much the clock.

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What is a good latch?

The baby is latched on to the underside of the areola and not just the tip of the nipple. The nipple is at the junction of the hard and soft palate. This is comfortable, pain free for mother and stimulates her milk production.

How do you know that the baby gets enough milk?

You can hear and/or see the baby swallow when breastfeeding. Baby is satisfied and not showing signs of feeding cues in between feeds. Voiding and stooling is one of the signs of adequate feeding in the babies.

On the first day baby should have at least one urine and stool. After the first 2 days, the baby should have at least 3-5 urines and the 3-5 stools should be changing color from black/green to yellow.

NOTE: hard, painful breasts, and positional stripes on nipples are usually indicative of inadequate milk transfer.

Your doctor may tell you to supplement your baby if

There is excessive jaundice (high risk zone), excessive wt loss (>10% in term infants, >7% in preterm infants <37wks gestation), the infant was born at 34- 35wks gestation, the voiding and stooling is not adequate or any other medical reasons. Whenever the baby needs supplementing, please help the mother express breast milk (hand expression and pumping) every time after breastfeeding. Also, instruct the mother to always breastfeed first before giving the baby the supplement. Always supplement with the mother's own expressed milk before giving formula. Get lactation consult for all mothers whose babies' are being supplemented. .

When to ask for Lactation Consultant's support?

Whenever you feel that the baby is not latching well, or if mother has a sore nipple, inverted nipple, bleeding nipple or any pain associated with breastfeeding ask for lactation consult. If the baby receives supplements after breastfeeding, please ask for lactation consult so that they can help the mother establish exclusive breastfeeding eventually. First time mothers and teenage mothers may also benefit from lactation consult.