

Breastfeeding Techniques

Importance of Breastfeeding

Human milk is uniquely suited for human infants. It is easy to digest and contains all the nutrients that babies need in the early months of life. Breast milk contains antibodies specific to illnesses encountered by the baby and fatty acids that play a role in infant brain and visual development. Breast fed babies have fewer allergies and asthma, fewer infections, less diarrhea, and a lower incidence of crib death. Maternal benefits include feeling closer to the baby, quicker return to pre-pregnancy weight, protection against cancer (breast, ovary and uterus) and protection against osteoporosis.

Getting Started

You generate breast milk soon after delivery by allowing the baby to suckle the nipple. This causes prolactin and oxytocin to be released from your brain and milk production begins. Prolactin activates the milk-producing cells to manufacture milk. Oxytocin is responsible for the release of the milk from the alveoli. From the alveoli, milk ducts empty the milk into lactiferous sinuses beneath the areola. Each sinus narrows into ducts which release milk through the nipple when the nipple is suckled.

The milk supply will “come-in” during the second or third day after delivery. Colostrum is a thick yellow nutritional milk produced during the first few days of life. The “let-down” reflex refers to the baby nursing and the breast filling with milk. After a few days, the “let-down” reflex may occur each time you think of the baby or hear any baby cry.

Milk is generated by supply and demand. The more the baby nurses, the more milk is produced. Pumping will increase the milk supply. Storing extra milk in the freezer can allow the mother some freedom away from the hungry baby and also allow others to participate in feeding. Breastfeeding and bottle feeding require different set of jaw muscles from the baby. If the baby is feeding well, it is recommended that the baby not take a bottle for at least three weeks to minimize “nipple confusion”.

Lactation consultants make rounds and will visit you while you are in the hospital to help you and answer your questions. The postpartum nurses are also very good resources and will help you with different breastfeeding techniques and feeding positions.

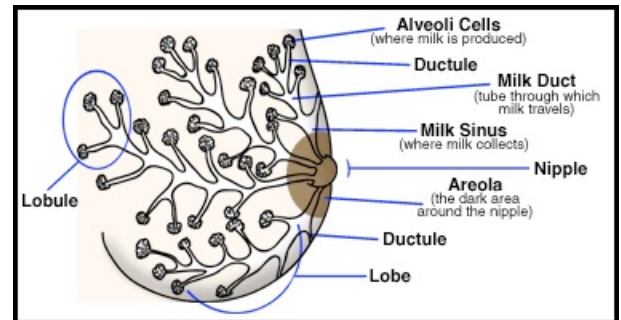
Tips for Fathers

Being a mother is one of the most challenging things we ever do and breastfeeding is often not easy in the first weeks. A new mother needs encouragement and support. The following words can help: “This is hard work isn’t it? I’m so proud of you!”, “You must be really tired. What can I do to help?”, “Most moms don’t feel confident in the beginning. Like any new skill it takes practice--for you and the baby.”, “Your nipples look sore, I know how hard it is now, but it will get better. Let’s work on position and latch.” “I can tell you are really frustrated. Let’s get some help with this”.

In the first few months of the baby’s life, fatigue can sometimes be overwhelming. Providing meals, helping with the household or other siblings and “mothering the mother” are important. Get help if it is needed.

Other resources include:

www.lowmg.com/medicalinfo/obstetric/breast_feeding.html
www.lalecheleague.org or (800) 886-4324
www.breastfeedingonline.com
www.4woman.gov/breastfeeding
www.medela.com
www.lactationeducationconsultants.com/books.html



The Ultimate Breastfeeding Book of Answers by Dr. Jack Newman and Teresa Pitman
The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding by La Leche League International
The Nursing Mother’s Companion by Kathleen Huggins, RN, CLC
The Complete Book of Breastfeeding by Marvin S Eiger, MD and Sally Wendos Olds