

# Breastfeeding:

## *Tips for Before, During, and After Your Hospital Stay*

### Breastfeeding has powerful benefits for you and your baby.

As a mother, one of the most important things you will decide is how to feed your baby. Intermountain Healthcare supports breastfeeding — and encourages you to consider these health benefits of breastfeeding:

- Natural source of the nutrients your baby needs
- Less risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Fewer ear and respiratory infections for your baby
- Enhances newborn brain development
- Less risk your baby will be overweight
- Less risk of diabetes for your baby and you
- Less risk of postpartum depression for you
- Less risk of breast and ovarian cancer for you
- Faster recovery for you

### Breastfeeding is a skill — reach out to get support and help.

Breastfeeding is natural for you and your baby — but is a skill that needs to be learned. Speak up and ask questions about breastfeeding before your baby is born and while you are in the hospital. This will help you continue to breastfeed after you go home.

### Tips for BEFORE you go to the hospital

- **Learn about breastfeeding.** Go online, read books, take a class and talk with other moms who have reached their breastfeeding goals. The links in the box beneath the photo are a good place to learn more.
- **Get the support of your partner.** Go to breastfeeding classes and read the materials together.
- **Gather a support team.** Ask friends or relatives who have breastfed if you can call them whenever you need help or support.

*This handout gives information to help you breastfeed your baby. Follow the tips listed here — and talk to your doctor or nurse.*



Content derives from the Speak Up campaign, an initiative of The Joint Commission, the nation's largest healthcare accrediting body promoting quality and safety, and these supporters:

- Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine  
[www.bfmed.org](http://www.bfmed.org)
- American Academy of Pediatrics  
[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)
- Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
[www.awhonn.org](http://www.awhonn.org)
- Baby-Friendly USA, Inc.  
[www.babyfriendlyusa.org](http://www.babyfriendlyusa.org)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding)
- March of Dimes  
[www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)
- United States Breastfeeding Committee  
[www.usbreastfeeding.org](http://www.usbreastfeeding.org)

- **Talk to your doctor or nurse about breastfeeding.** Ask what happens at the hospital after the baby is born. Tell your doctor or nurse you want to breastfeed within the first hour, unless medically not possible.
- **Ask your doctor or nurse about birthing choices** and how they affect breastfeeding.
- **If you have a written birth plan, include that you want to breastfeed.**
- **Ask if the hospital has a lactation consultant.** They are trained to provide additional help if you have problems breastfeeding. Ask how you can contact the lactation consultant.
- **Visit your new baby's doctor or nurse.** Ask how they can help you and your baby get started breastfeeding. Ask if they work with a lactation consultant.

## Tips for DURING your hospital stay

When you go to the hospital, speak up about your desire to breastfeed. Tell your nurses and doctors that you want to breastfeed as soon as possible after your baby is born. Also, to promote bonding with your baby and lay a good foundation for breastfeeding, follow these tips:

- **Ask that your baby be placed skin-to-skin with you as soon as your baby is born.** Stay skin-to-skin until after the first breastfeeding. Skin-to-skin contact can help keep your baby's temperature and breathing normal. It can also increase your milk supply.
- **Stay close during newborn testing.** Tell caregivers you want to breastfeed before or during your baby's tests — many tests can be done while your baby is skin-to-skin with you. Ask to go along if your baby is taken away for a test.

### What if I have a C-section (cesarean delivery)?

You can still have skin-to-skin contact and breastfeed. You should be able to do this within the first two hours unless there is a medical reason not to.

### What if I have more than one baby?

You can usually breastfeed if you have more than one baby. Your body will make enough milk to feed all your babies.

- **Have your baby stay in your room.** "Rooming in" encourages skin-to-skin contact and helps you recognize early feeding cues such as when your baby starts sucking his or her fist.
- **Tell staff that you don't want your baby given formula** unless there is a medical reason for it.
- **Ask staff not to give your baby a pacifier or bottle.** These should not be given until your baby is about four weeks old, after breastfeeding is well established.
- **Ask your nurse to help you breastfeed.** The nurse should watch you breastfeed several times before you leave the hospital. If you have trouble even after you've worked with your nurse, talk to a lactation consultant.
- **Talk to your doctor, nurse or lactation consultant about what you should eat and drink** while you are breastfeeding.

- **Wash your hands often,** especially before touching your baby. Watch to see that caregivers and visitors wash their hands, too. Speak up if you need to remind them.

### What if my baby is sick or preterm and can't breastfeed?

Breast milk can help your baby get better faster and develop properly. Ask your nurses or lactation consultant about pumping your milk so it can be fed to your baby.

- **Before you leave the hospital, ask who you can call with breastfeeding questions.** Ask for contacts at a breastfeeding support group in your area.

## Tips for AFTER you leave the hospital

Life with a newborn can be challenging. For the first few weeks, most babies do not eat and sleep on a regular schedule. The following tips can help you continue breastfeeding when you return home.

- **Rest. Recover. Focus on your baby.** Plan to spend a lot of time resting, holding your baby skin-to-skin, and breastfeeding. During the early weeks, your baby should not go more than three or four hours between feedings.
- **Plan to see your baby's doctor or nurse** within 48 hours of coming home from the hospital, or within 24 hours if your baby has a health problem. The doctor or nurse will make sure that your baby is healthy and getting enough to eat.
- **Keep your baby within hearing range.** This will help you respond quickly to your baby's early feeding cues.
- **If you have questions or find breastfeeding painful, call an expert.** Breastfeeding might be uncomfortable, but it shouldn't hurt. Also, don't feel embarrassed if you need to ask for help. Even if you have breastfed before, every baby is different.

### What if I get sick? Should I stop breastfeeding?

Keep breastfeeding. Be sure to tell your doctor or nurse that you are breastfeeding. You can safely breastfeed even while you are taking most medicines.