

Breastfeeding



Congratulations!

This is an exciting time and the beginning of an incredible journey – a journey marked by many important decisions. We want to encourage you to explore your baby’s feeding options.

Why is breastfeeding so important?

Here are significant benefits to consider.

- Your baby will receive antibodies and develop a stronger immune system to better protect them from allergies, asthma, SIDS, childhood cancer and diabetes than if he/she is exclusively formula fed.
- Your baby will have fewer ear infections, respiratory infections and diarrhea – three illnesses that are more common in a formula-fed baby’s first year of life.
- Breast milk is the perfect food for a baby. Your milk has ALL the right ingredients for growth and development, including those for your baby’s brain and nervous system.
- Breast milk is easier to digest so there is less spit-up and gassiness. A happy tummy means a happy baby!
- Breastfeeding safeguards against overfeeding your baby – which means he/she is less likely to be overweight later in life.

AAP and WHO recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months. After six months, or when your pediatrician recommends, your baby can start other foods such as puree also with receiving breast milk. That means nothing but breast milk for the healthy newborn.

There are many benefits for you as well

- It’s convenient. Breast milk is free and always readily available at the perfect temperature. Breast milk stores well and can be frozen for future use, in case you must be away from your baby.
- Your uterus returns to pre-pregnant size quickly and most mothers lose pregnancy weight faster when they breastfeed six months or longer. Breastfeeding also helps you bleed less after delivery.
- Your risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, heart disease, and osteoporosis are decreased when you breastfeed.
- Feeding time means you get quiet moments throughout your day to sit down, relax and just enjoy your baby.



De George Women & Children Services

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What should I expect?

Although breast feeding is natural, it doesn't always come naturally initially. Be patient with yourself and your baby and ask for help in the early days.

For the first few days of your baby's life, your breasts will not feel much different than they did during pregnancy, but you are still able to feed your baby all he needs. After two or three days, your milk volume increases noticeably, which meets your baby's growing needs. In certain circumstances there may be delay onset of milk production. Ask your consultant for advice.

Your baby has a small stomach capacity, so plan on feeding every 2-3 hours for the baby's first few weeks of life. The stimulation of the breast increases the milk supply over time.

Your nipples may feel tender as you get started with breastfeeding, but feeding your baby should not be consistently painful. If it is, you should ask to have a feeding observed by a trained staff member.

Effective positioning and latching techniques

You will receive plenty of breastfeeding support in the hospital during your first feedings. It is important that you position and latch your baby correctly when feeding your baby to get plenty of milk and to prevent your nipples from getting sore. Alternate which breast you start with to minimize engorgement and never more than thirty minutes of active suckling per breast to avoid excess friction on the nipples.

You will need to know how to:

- Support your breast in a comfortable hold.
- Hold your baby close (tummy to tummy).
- Pull your baby in towards your breast once their mouth is open wide (like a yawn) and their tongue is down.
- Look for the nipple and areola to be in the baby's mouth and your baby's lips will open wide and against the breast.

When is the baby ready to eat?

If your baby doesn't show interest in breastfeeding immediately after delivery, don't worry. By holding your baby skin-to-skin on your chest (and covered by blankets to keep you both warm) your baby will soon start to show an interest in feeding, from smelling the pheromones you

produce. You may also try hand expressing a few drops of colostrum from your breast.

You will be encouraged to always keep your baby close by and feed your baby when you observe their hunger cues. In fact, we encourage that you continue to hold your baby skin-to-skin as much as possible during your hospital stay.

You will soon learn the signs that your baby is ready to breastfeed. Some signs of readiness for feeding are licking, smacking, turning their head from side to side, putting their fist in their mouth. Crying is often a late sign of hunger, or perhaps an indication of another need - like a diaper change. Your feedings will go more smoothly if you feed your baby when you see early cues of hunger. A tight arm and fist also indicates a hungry baby. It's okay to try for ten minutes and take a break for an hour in all attempts to breastfeed.

Making enough milk

Early and frequent breastfeeding helps your body establish a full milk supply for your baby. Most mothers make plenty of milk for their babies without the need to supplement them with formula. Newborns eat often with no set time schedule. Often a newborn wants to breast feed more than the mother might expect, especially at night if they were active at night within the womb, we will help you recognize signs that your baby is well fed and getting plenty of milk.

If the baby doesn't settle, check their diaper and change if necessary. Skin-to-skin and listening to your heartbeat can also settle them if they've already fed. Sometimes things are out of your control and supplementation is needed. Don't worry, it's not a reflection on you or your body.

We're here to help

Your lactation support staff at Jupiter Medical Center is a great resource for accurate and dependable information as well as your Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) breastfeeding support team.

Breastfeeding support contact numbers:

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| Jupiter Lactation Support | 561-263-2676 |
| WIC Palm Beach County | 561-357-6007 |
| La Leche League | 877-452-5324 |



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