

Breastfeeding...

Best for Your Baby and Best for You

Breast milk is the healthiest food you can give your baby. Babies who are breastfed are less likely to develop many acute and chronic diseases and are more likely to achieve optimal growth and development. Breastfeeding protects mothers too. Mothers who breastfeed have less risk of breast, uterine and ovarian cancer.

During Pregnancy:

During pregnancy your breasts will change.

- Your breasts may seem heavier and larger.
- Your breasts may be more tender or sensitive to touch.
- The dark area around the nipple, the areola, may become darker and may have small pimple-like bumps.
- Your breasts may leak early milk (colostrum) during the 2nd and 3rd trimester.

You do not have to prepare your breasts during pregnancy. Your body does that for you. **Your breasts are planning on you breastfeeding your baby. You will have milk.** Talk to friends who have breastfed their babies. They can answer questions and support you. Go to some classes to learn more about breastfeeding. Join a support group so you can talk to other mothers and help each other out.

In the hospital:

- Let everyone know that you are a breastfeeding mother.
- Begin breastfeeding after the delivery, when the baby is awake and alert.
- Always ask for help if you are having problems or experience pain.
- Avoid the use of bottles or pacifiers.
- Feed your baby often.
- Watch for hunger signs:
 - Sucking on fingers
 - Turning his/her head toward you when holding
 - Opening the mouth and rooting
 - Hiccupping

Keep your baby with you as much as possible. You should sleep when the baby sleeps, in order to get your rest. If your baby sleeps more than 3 hours since the last feed, **wake him/her.**

At home your baby should:

- Suckle and swallow during the feeding.
- Breastfeed 8-12 times in 24 hours.
- Have 6-8 wet diapers and 3 or more stools a day after the third day.
- Seem content after feedings.

At home your breasts will seem very full, usually by the 4th or 5th day. Feed your baby frequently. This will cause your breasts to soften. If the baby has difficulty latching on because of the fullness, try hand expressing your breasts or using a breast pump for a few minutes to soften the breast. You can also apply warm towels to your breasts between feeds to reduce the swelling. The swelling is temporary.

Remember: The more your baby breastfeeds the more milk you produce.

For any problems you may call:

- * Your doctor _____
- * Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies (770) 451-5501
- * Your local WIC department _____