

SpeakUP™



What you need to know about breastfeeding in 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.
- Ask that your baby be placed skin-to-skin on 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.
- If you are cold, ask for a blanket to cover you and your baby. Your body heat will keep your baby warm as long as your baby's back is covered. Your baby does not need to be tightly wrapped.
- Tell caregivers you want to breastfeed before your baby's tests are done. Many tests can be done while your baby is skin-to-skin on you. Ask to go along if your baby is taken away for a test.
- If you have a Cesarean birth, 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.
- 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.
- Speak up and tell staff that you do not want your baby given formula or water, 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.

Get the breastfeeding support you need in the hospital

- Ask your nurse to help you breastfeed. The nurse should watch you breastfeed several times before you leave the hospital. The nurse can tell if your baby is latching on and getting milk.
- If you have trouble breastfeeding, ask your nurse for help. Ask to talk to a lactation consultant if you continue to have trouble.
- Talk to your doctor, nurse or lactation consultant about what you should eat or drink while you are breastfeeding.
- Wash your hands often, especially before touching your baby. Watch to see that caregivers wash their hands. Do not be afraid to speak up if they do not. Ask visitors to wash their hands.
- Breast milk is very important if your baby is born early or is sick. Breast milk can help your baby get better faster and develop properly. The nurses or lactation consultant can help you learn how to pump your milk if your baby cannot breastfeed.
- If your baby has to stay in the hospital, stay with your baby, if possible. If you cannot stay, visit often. Ask the doctor or nurse if you can hold your baby skin-to-skin. This may be possible, even in a special care unit.
- When you leave, ask if you can call the hospital when you have questions about breastfeeding. Also ask for contacts at a breastfeeding support group in your area.
- Breastfeeding may be uncomfortable at first, but it should not hurt. If it does, ask for help.
- If anyone tells you to stop breastfeeding, ask why and get a second opinion.

Speak Up: What you need to know about breastfeeding is supported by

Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine
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Baby-Friendly USA, Inc.
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United States Breastfeeding Committee



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