

A guide to feeding your baby

Information and advice for parents to be

Maternity

Congratulations on your pregnancy. This booklet provides help and support for you to build a positive relationship and give you advice on feeding your baby.

Building a relationship with your baby

Ultrasound scans have shown that while your baby is inside you, they will yawn, suck their thumb, sleep, exercise and move about to get comfortable. It is amazing to think all of this is happening inside you. From around 20 weeks your baby can respond to sound and they start to recognise voices. For this reason, to help you develop a relationship with your baby, you could spend time:

- Talking to your baby.
- Playing music – such as your favourite song or some soft and gentle music.
- Getting your partner to join in too as your baby will recognise their voice.
- Giving your bump a name and try to picture how your baby will look.

The more relaxed you are, the more relaxed your baby will be. You can stroke your bump and watch your baby respond to your touch by moving or kicking.

Being pregnant and becoming a mum can be worrying and stressful for many reasons. Your baby's brain is developing all of the time and if you are feeling stressed, anxious or depressed this can affect your baby's development. Talk to others about how you are feeling, your fears and your expectations. If you think you are experiencing depression, please speak to your midwife who can help you.



Skin to skin contact

After your baby is born, whether you have had your baby in water, a normal birth, by caesarean or forceps, you will be offered skin to skin contact.

Skin to skin contact soothes your baby which reduces their stress levels and increases the bonding process. Other benefits include helping your baby to:

- feel warm, calm and safe
- maintain a normal breathing and heart rate pattern
- begin developing their immunity
- have a normal blood sugar level (particularly important if your baby is born smaller than expected or if you have diabetes)

A guide to feeding your baby

Information and advice for parents to be

Maternity

During skin to skin contact your body will also produce hormones to help prepare your breasts for breastfeeding.



Feeding cues

When your baby needs feeding they will show you signs which we call 'feeding cues'. These might include:

- Yawning or facial movements
- Rooting- your baby will turn its head from side to side, opening their mouth as if they are looking for a feed
- Lifting their head/head bobbing
- Salivating
- Licking- sticking their tongue out, licking their lips
- Becoming alert- looking around
- Moving their arms and legs as if they are having a good stretch
- Sucking or trying to suck on their fist/fingers/blanket
- Crying is a late feeding cue and your baby will often be too upset to start their feed.

If this happens, gently hold, stroke and talk to your baby to calm them down. You cannot spoil your baby with too much attention; remember they will have come from a dark, warm, small space into a big, bright, loud world.

If your baby has remained skin to skin, you might notice your baby trying to bob his/her head towards your breast. Allow your baby to do this and they may find the breast themselves.

A guide to feeding your baby

Information and advice for parents to be

Maternity

What are the benefits of breastfeeding?

There are many reasons we encourage breastfeeding. There are benefits for both you and your baby which include:

Benefits for your baby

- Your baby has less chance of developing gastro-enteritis (tummy infection) and diarrhoea
- Your baby has less chance of developing ear, water and chest infections
- Your baby is less likely to develop diabetes and become obese later in life. If you are diabetic your baby already has an increased risk of diabetes and by breastfeeding you can help to reduce their risk
- Your baby is less likely to develop asthma, eczema and allergies
- Your baby will have better speech development
- It will reduce your chance of your baby dying from sudden infant death syndrome (Cot death)
- If your baby is born prematurely, breastfeeding will improve the development of their brain, central nervous system and sight. Your baby is much less likely to develop a potentially fatal condition for premature baby's called Necrotising Enterocolitis

Benefits for you

- You are less likely to develop breast and ovarian cancer and osteoporosis (brittle bones)
- You are less likely to experience postnatal depression
- If you exclusively breastfeed your baby, you will use up to 500 calories a day which is the same as about 40 minutes of running or 2 ½ hours of shopping!

Other benefits

- You don't have to buy any special or extra equipment saving between £450-600 a year on formula milk, sterilising equipment and bottles
- It helps you to develop a relationship with your baby
- You will always have a feed available for your baby at the right temperature. Everybody's milk is slightly different and your milk is made perfectly to suit your baby



A guide to feeding your baby

Information and advice for parents to be

Maternity

Breastfeeding in public

The law in this county protects your right to breastfeed in any public place (The Equality Act 2010). This means you can breastfeed anywhere you want to: A restaurant, a shop, a café, a leisure centre, a park- literally anywhere your baby and you have a right to be, you can breastfeed.

Tips and advice for better breastfeeding

To get your breastfeeding off to the best start there are some things you can do to help yourself:

- Go to a local breastfeeding class (ask your midwife or call the Infant Feeding Team to find out where).
- If you know your baby will be born prematurely, or if you are diabetic, speak to a member of the infant feeding team about expressing milk for your baby. We also have a leaflet called 'expressing your milk antenatally' which you can view on our website.
- Have immediate skin to skin contact with your baby for at least 1 hour or at least until after the first feed
- Breastfeed your baby as soon as possible after their birth (ideally within the first hour), and then offer the second feed before your baby is six hours old.
- Ask for help if you are struggling or if your baby will not feed.
- Try not to give your baby any bottle milk - this should only be given following the advice of your midwife or paediatrician (your baby's doctor).

Helping your baby to breastfeed

A midwife or a support worker will be present to help you when you first feed your baby. You may be sitting up, lying on your back or side. Make sure you are comfortable as you may be feeding your baby for some time.

How your baby should be positioned

- Position your baby so they are lying with their head and body in a straight line.
- Don't hold the back of your baby's head as this needs to be free to tilt back slightly.
- Hold your baby close to your body.
- Bring your baby to the breast, not your breast to the baby.
- Your baby's nose needs to be opposite your nipple.

A guide to feeding your baby

Information and advice for parents to be

Maternity

Attaching baby to your breast

Your baby's mouth should be open, their tongue will come down and forward and their chin, lower lip and tongue should touch the breast first.

During the feed

- Your baby's mouth will be wide open.
- Their cheeks should be full and round, not sucked in.
- Their nose should be free with their chin pressed into the Breast. It may look like baby can't breathe but if you don't hold the back of your baby's head, they can move their head if they need to.
- More of your areola (the brown area) should be visible above the baby's top lip than below (don't be tempted to move your breast to look as you may disturb the feed).
- **Your baby will take short sucks initially, followed by slow deep sucks with pauses. At the end of a feed, your baby will 'flutter suck' (this is normal, please do not take baby off your breast).**
- There should not be any other noise than swallowing, for example no smacking or clicking sounds.



At the end of the feed

- Your baby should release the breast on their own.
- Your nipple should be normal shaped, not wedged or squashed.

A guide to feeding your baby

Information and advice for parents to be

Maternity

Bottle feeding

Any breast milk you give to your baby is of benefit and this is particularly true for their first feed. We know that if the first feed your baby has is a breastfeed/breast milk it will coat the lining of your baby's tummy and thereby offering them some protection against allergies, diabetes and eczema.

If you choose to bottle feed your baby, when you feed your baby, keep him/her close. Offer the first feed while your baby is held in skin to skin contact with you.

Your baby has a very small tummy so do not give them more than 20mls for their first feed. Try to feed your baby in response to their feeding cues. It is easy to over feed a bottle fed baby due to their sucking reflex which can increase the chance of them developing obesity and diabetes in later life. To avoid this, look for signs that your baby has finished, and end the feed.

Try to keep the number of people who feed your baby down to a minimum to increase your baby's attachment and sense of security. Alternate the sides you feed your baby, for example, for one feed hold your baby with your left arm and close to your left side, and for the next feed hold your baby with your right arm and close to your right side; this will reduce your baby's chance of developing an ear infection.



A guide to feeding your baby

Information and advice for parents to be

Maternity

Breast massage and hand expressing – the basics

Hand expressing is useful because;

- You don't need any equipment
- It is better at removing colostrum (The first milk which is full of antibodies), in the first few days than a pump. However pumps can be good at stimulating your supply.
- It can help relieve you if you are feeling very full and struggling to latch baby on or are suffering with mastitis

Gentle breast massage can be used at anytime to help your milk flow and make expressing milk easier. Spend a few minutes;

- Gently stroking, or massaging your knuckles or hands over your breasts
- Find the correct place to press. This is usually a few centimetres back from the base of your nipple where your breast feels firmer. The right position may vary from mother to mother so experiment to see what works for you
- Hold your fingers in a 'C' shape.
- Gently squeeze and release, squeeze and release, and keep repeating this until your milk begins to flow. (It is normal to only collect a small amount of milk in the first few days after your baby's birth)
- When the milk stops, move your fingers round to express a different part of your breast. Repeat the squeeze and release process. Repeat this for your other breast.



If your baby is on the Neonatal Unit (NNU)

If your baby is on NNU, we recommend that you start hand expressing and using the pump as soon as possible (ideally within 2 hours of your baby's birth).

We advise you start double pumping 8-10 times in 24hours including at least once at night and do not leave it more than 5 hours between expressing.

Remember this is about stimulating your milk flow, so don't worry if you get a small amount. You will most likely need to hand express either before or after using the pump to begin with, until your milk supply increases. The best place to express your milk is close to your baby, as this will help with your let down reflex. If this is not possible, try having a picture of your baby or an item of clothing next to you as you express.

A guide to feeding your baby

Information and advice for parents to be

Maternity

Building your own special baby bond

Mums and dads interact with their children in completely different ways and you will form your own individual relationships with your baby.

Skin to skin contact is not just for mums; your baby will find your chest very warm and cosy too. Babies often settle happily with their dad, as the smell of mum's milk can be distracting for them.

You could change your baby's nappy, bathe him, and make the most of eye contact, talking, playing and skin to skin.



Feeding your new baby

Evidence has shown that mums are more likely to start and continue breastfeeding when dads actively participate in the decision, understand the benefits and apply a positive attitude. Your support and encouragement are vital for your partner.

What can you do?

- Take as much time off work as you can
- Be around to take over some household chores
- Don't refuse help from anyone that offers, it will allow you to spend time with your family.
- Allow your partner to use her maternal instincts
- Encourage her to keep breastfeeding. Tell her what a great job she's doing
- If she is having difficulties encourage her to ask for help
- If you are bottle feeding your baby, share the workload.
- When the midwife/health visitor calls stay and be involved
- Keep an eye on how many visitors you receive and how long they stay
- Provide regular food and drink for your partner, to help her keep her energy levels up.
- Encourage her to sleep when your baby sleeps
- Play, bath and take your baby for walks

Most importantly enjoy the time you have together with your newborn.

A guide to feeding your baby

Information and advice for parents to be

Maternity

Relationship Building

Care that is loving, responsive, consistent and secure enables babies to develop, learn about the world, feel safe, loved and looked after. This is an ideal way for your child to develop positive relationships and for their brain to grow in the best possible way. Did you know babies love looking at your face and listening to your voice?

To help develop loving relationships with your baby why not try to;

- Imagine how things feel and look to them.
- Make lots of eye contact with your baby.
- Talk to them and copy your baby's sounds.
- Make smiley facial expressions.
- Use lots of gentle touch.

Please remember you cannot spoil your baby with too many cuddles or by holding your baby; your baby needs to feel loved and secure. Babies who are regularly left to cry have been shown to have high stress levels which stunts brain development – **so you must respond to your baby if they are crying.**

Contact details

The Infant Feeding Team is available to contact on:

Tel: 0781 606 1633

Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 4:30pm, and some weekends.

We can offer you help over the telephone or arrange to meet you in the hospital. We are happy to talk to you about your concerns or worries about feeding your baby. to meet with you to talk about expressing your milk during your pregnancy (for example if you are diabetic or know your baby will be born early).

A guide to feeding your baby

Information and advice for parents to be

Maternity

Further information

There is lots of breastfeeding support available to you both locally and nationally. If you feel that you do need support with breastfeeding, your midwife, health visitor or the infant feeding team can provide you with the local Breastfeeding Peer Supporters in your area.

Local contacts

Infant Feeding Team

Tel: 0781 606 1633

Website: www.swbh.nhs.uk/services/infant-feeding-team

Sandwell Breastfeeding Network

Tel: 0750 577 5357

National contacts

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers:

Tel: 0300 330 5453

Website: www.abm.me.uk

Breastfeeding Network:

Tel: 0300 100 0210

Website: www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

La Leche League:

Tel: 0845 120 2918

Website: www.laleche.org.uk

National Childbirth Trust

Tel: 0300 330 0771

Website: www.nct.org.uk

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5495 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net



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