

Breastfeeding support on the Neonatal Unit

Information and advice for mothers

Neonatal

Having a baby who is being cared for on the neonatal unit can be a very difficult time for parents and may have come as a huge shock to you. Although the start to your baby's life may not be as you imagined, you can still do many of the things you planned. With our support and your commitment it is still possible for you to breastfeed your baby.

You will already have been given lots of information about the benefits of breast milk and breastfeeding for you and your baby. Breast milk will give your vulnerable baby an excellent start in their crucial early months. If you are not sure how you want to feed your baby yet, why not give breastfeeding a go? You can always switch to other methods later on.

What support is available?

For many mums breastfeeding is unknown territory and breastfeeding a very small baby may seem particularly daunting. All staff on the neonatal unit receive breastfeeding training and are able to give you advice and support. We will support you to express milk for your baby and in most cases your baby will be able to have the milk straight away.

Neonatal unit breastfeeding advisor

The neonatal unit breastfeeding advisor is Louise Thompson who you may meet on the unit. Louise can give you advice and support in person or over the phone on breastfeeding and expressing milk and you can discuss any concerns about these with her.

You can contact Louise on 07976 499 507. If your call cannot be answered straight away, please leave a voicemail message or send a text and she will contact you as soon as possible.

Breast pumps

Breast pumps are available on the unit for all mums to use. Mums who booked to have their baby at City Hospital may be able to hire a pump from the unit to use at home free of charge which should be returned when your baby is discharged. If you booked to have your baby at another hospital our nursing staff will help you to obtain a pump from them.

Support with skin-to-skin/kangaroo care

We will support you to give your baby skin-to-skin/kangaroo care. By holding your baby wearing just a nappy next to your skin you can recreate the nurturing environment that was interrupted by premature birth. Skin-to-skin will boost your milk-producing hormones and is a great step towards breastfeeding.

Aromatherapy

We can help you to use aromatherapy products formulated specifically for mums of neonatal unit babies, to help you relax, improve your milk supply and manage any breast discomfort.



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Breastfeeding classes

Breastfeeding classes are held on a group or individual basis. During the classes you will be given information about breastfeeding and can discuss what to expect from your baby and support with moving towards breastfeeding.

Bedrooms for parents to help establish breastfeeding

Bedrooms for parents are available on and close to the neonatal unit where you can 'room-in' with your baby to establish breastfeeding when your baby is getting ready to leave the unit.

Referral to support for when you go home

We can put you in touch with community breastfeeding support services to access when you take your baby home.

Further information

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a member of staff on the neonatal unit, or the breastfeeding advisor.

For more information about having a premature or sick baby and further support available:

Bliss – for babies born too soon, too small, too sick

www.bliss.org.uk

Family support helpline (freephone): 0500 618 140

Best Beginings

www.bestbeginings.org.uk/small-wonders

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Sources used for the information in this leaflet

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- 'Breastfeeding special care babies (2nd edition)', Sandra Lang, 2002
- 'Feeding and nutrition in the preterm infant', Elizabeth Jones and Caroline King, 2005
- Renfrew et al, 'Preventing disease and saving resources: The potential contribution of increasing breastfeeding rates in the UK', Unicef, 2012

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5303 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net



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