



Your doctor or midwife will put your baby on your chest right away for “the golden hour” after birth.

Breastfeeding Success – Hospital Experience

Feed your baby as soon as possible after delivery

The hour right after your baby is born is called “the golden hour.” You and your baby are excited to meet each other. You want to hold your baby, and your baby wants to breastfeed. After a few hours, your baby will be very sleepy, and it may be hard to wake them up to breastfeed. Make the most of “the golden hour” and breastfeed your baby as much as possible. This will help your body know to start making more milk.

If you have a C-section, you can breastfeed your baby right away if you and your baby are okay.

If you are not with your baby, you can hand express your colostrum so that your baby can be fed your breast milk even if you’re separated.

Hold your baby against your bare skin

Skin-to-skin care is when your baby only wears a diaper and hat. You hold your baby against your bare chest and then put a blanket over your baby’s back to keep you both warm. If you and your baby are okay, the doctor or midwife will put your baby on your chest right away for “the golden hour” after birth. Your baby can stay on your chest while the doctor or midwife does your baby’s first check-up. If you and your baby are not together, your birthing partner may be able to do skin-to-skin contact with your baby until you are back together.

Skin-to-skin care is good for you and your baby.

- The smell of your skin and your breast milk will help your baby find your breast to start feeding.
- The good bacteria on your skin will help protect your baby.
- Your baby will feel warm and safe.

Try not to use bottles or pacifiers

For the first few days after your baby is born, breastfeed and keep your baby skin-to-skin as much as possible. This will help your body know to make more milk. If you use a bottle or a pacifier too soon after your baby is born, your body might make less milk. If you can, wait about a month after your baby is born before using bottles or pacifiers.

It is okay to give your baby a pacifier during a test or procedure that might hurt. As soon as you can after the test or procedure is over, start breastfeeding your baby to calm them instead of using a pacifier.



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Keep your baby in your room at the hospital

As long as you and your baby are okay, your baby should be in your hospital room with you. This is called rooming-in. Your baby will feel safe if they stay in your room because they will be near you. You will be able to rest better, which will help you heal faster. If your baby has to leave your room for a test or procedure, your birthing partner can go with the baby to help keep them calm.

Rooming-in is good for you and your baby.

- Your baby is protected from germs that could make them sick.
- If your baby cries, you can check on your baby right away. Your baby will feel safe and calm.
- Your partner and your family can help you take care of your baby.

Limit your visitors

After you have your baby, you need to rest and your baby needs to eat. Your baby should eat at least 8 to 12 times in the first 24 hours. Doctors, nurses, and other hospital staff will be coming in and out of your room while you are in the hospital. Your hospital room will be very busy!

It is okay to ask family and friends to wait until you are home from the hospital to visit or ask people to visit for just a few minutes.

If family and friends do come to the hospital to visit:

- Ask them to call you first. You might be too tired or you might want to spend time with your baby by yourself. It is okay to ask them to come at a different time.
- Ask your nurse to put a sign on the door to your room that says you and your baby are resting and to knock on the door and wait until you say it is okay to come in.
- If you feel comfortable with visitors in the room while you breastfeed your baby, tell them they can stay.
- If you do not want people to visit you, ask your nurse to tell visitors they need to come back another time.

It is ok to ask for help with breastfeeding

If you have a question or are worried about breastfeeding, talk to your nurse or a breastfeeding specialist. They can show you how to hold your baby to breastfeed, make sure your baby is sucking the right way, and know when your baby is done eating. They can also teach you how to hand express your breast milk and prevent soreness or other things that happen to a lot of new moms.

Find a breastfeeding specialist or support group near you by visiting health.ri.gov/breastfeeding

If your baby can't breastfeed, express your milk

Sometimes, a baby can't breastfeed after they are born. If your baby can't breastfeed, you should learn how to hand express, or use a double electric pump, to express your milk for your baby within 6 hours of giving birth. Ask your nurse or a breastfeeding specialist to teach you how to hand express or use a breast pump. If you think you will need a pump after you leave the hospital, ask the hospital to call your insurance company to get a breast pump to take home.

Birth control after you have your baby

It is okay to use birth control after you have your baby. Talk to your doctor or midwife about what kind of birth control you should use while you are breastfeeding.



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