

A photograph of a woman with dark curly hair, wearing a white tank top and gold hoop earrings, breastfeeding her baby. The baby is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt. They are sitting on a light-colored couch. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Exclusive breastfeeding is when your baby is only having your breast milk, and it is the healthiest way to feed your baby.

Breastfeeding Success – Be Prepared

Learn as much as you can about breastfeeding

The more you learn about breastfeeding before you have your baby, the more prepared you will be to overcome any challenges — and to celebrate your successes! Take a breastfeeding class, attend a breastfeeding support group, read books, watch videos, and ask questions.

Call the phone number on your health insurance card and ask what breastfeeding services and supplies (such as a breast pump) the insurance company might pay for.

Plan to exclusively breastfeed

Exclusive breastfeeding is when your baby is only having your breast milk, and it is the healthiest way to feed your baby. The more you breastfeed, the more milk your body makes. If you use formula, especially in the first few weeks after your baby is born, your body will make less milk. To get all of the health benefits of breastfeeding for both you and your baby, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding until your baby is 6 months old.

Colostrum is all your baby needs — trust your body

Colostrum is the milk your body makes the first few days after your baby is born. It is usually thick, sticky, and clear to yellow in color. Colostrum coats your baby's insides and helps prevent allergies and illness. Your colostrum is so protective, it acts like your baby's first immunization.

When your baby is first born, your body will make very small amounts of colostrum because your baby's stomach is small. As your baby gets older, their stomach gets bigger and your body makes more breast milk.



Breastfeeding Success – Be Prepared

Find people who can help you

Family and friends

- Take your partner and family members to a prenatal breastfeeding class or breastfeeding support group. Read breastfeeding books and watch videos with the people who will help you after your baby is born. They too need to learn about breastfeeding and how they can help you.

Ask your healthcare provider

- Some doctors or midwives specialize in offering breastfeeding support. Some doctor's offices have a breastfeeding specialist on staff. If you have questions or need help with breastfeeding, a breastfeeding specialist can spend extra time with you and your baby to make sure you get off to a good start.

Other things that can help you

- Meet with a breastfeeding specialist before you have your baby and get their phone number and email. A breastfeeding specialist can answer your questions, offer you tips and encouragement, and tell you about WIC and the Family Visiting Program, which may be available to help you.
- Find a breastfeeding support group and try to go to a few meetings before you have your baby. Talk to other moms who are breastfeeding their baby to learn more about their experiences.

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

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