

# Breastfeeding: The First 48 Hours

Congratulations on your new baby, and your decision to breastfeed! Breastmilk is the perfect food for your baby, and is a great way for you and your baby to stay healthy and close. The following guidelines will help you meet your baby's needs in the first few days of life.

- Before your milk comes in (often 3 to 5 days after giving birth), it may seem like your baby is not getting enough to eat. Babies are born with enough fluids and nutrition, so colostrum is all that the baby needs during the first few days after birth. Colostrum is a yellow, creamy form of early breastmilk. The first few days are a time for learning how to breastfeed, for both baby and mother. **Your nurse is available at all times to help you with nursing your baby, just call and ask!**



- After arriving in your room, try to breastfeed your infant as soon as possible. After this feeding, offer your baby the breast every 2 to 3 hours and at least 1 to 2 times during the night. These feedings are important to better establish your milk supply.
- We encourage you to keep your baby with you in your room during the entire hospital stay. This is the best way to learn about your baby's needs and whether or not he or she is hungry.

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Learn more about your health care.

- Respond to early signs of hunger. These include hands near or in the mouth, sucking, and general fussiness. Crying is a late sign of infant hunger, and your baby may be too frantic to feed well at that time.
- If your baby is sleepy when a feeding should occur, wake your baby by unwrapping the blanket, touching your baby, changing the diaper or holding him or her upright. Babies are often sleep normally during the first day of life.
- You may try skin to skin contact to keep your baby awake or increase his or her interest in breastfeeding.
- It is best to avoid using bottles of formula or glucose water in the first few weeks. Your milk supply depends on early and frequent feedings. When your milk “comes in,” at 3 to 5 days after birth, your baby will quickly regain all lost weight. It is best to avoid bottles and pacifiers until your milk supply is well established at 2 to 3 weeks of age.
- For additional information, there is programming on the Newborn Channel (35).
- Please review the breastfeeding articles in your **Caring for You and Your Baby** book.



**We hope breastfeeding is an enjoyable and relaxing experience!**

❖ **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu)**