

The Importance of Breastfeeding

- Babies are healthier. Breastfeeding protects against many infections, especially ear infections, respiratory infections, digestive disorders, and allergies.
- Mothers who breastfeed have less risk of developing breast cancer.
- Human milk is ideal for human babies. Breastfed babies have improved brain growth and are less likely to die from SIDS.
- Breastfeeding promotes the proper development of baby's jaw and facial structures.
- Adults who were breastfed have fewer chronic diseases such as diabetes and multiple sclerosis.
- Breastfeeding mothers lose their pregnancy weight gain faster.
- Everybody saves money! Less waste in landfills, diapers smell better, fewer doctor visits for sickness and less time off work for parents.

To Get a Good Start at Breastfeeding

- Breastfeed early and often. Watch your baby for hunger cues. Start within the first hour after birth and feed whenever your baby shows signs of hunger.
- Avoid bottles and pacifiers, especially until breastfeeding is well established, approximately three to four weeks. Your baby needs time to practice, and these items may confuse your baby and reduce milk supply.
- Breastfeeding should be comfortable. Hold your baby close with knees pointed at you. Help your baby get a deep "latch-on" at the breast. If the nipples or breast hurt, get help right away. Pain is NOT normal.
- Mom and baby need time together to learn how to do the "dance" of breastfeeding. Other chores (cooking, cleaning, and shopping) should be minimized or done by someone else.
- Spend time skin to skin to encourage feedings