



Breastfeeding

Perfect Nutrition for Your Baby

WILLAMETTE VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER **BIRTHING CENTER**

PERFECT NUTRITION for your new baby

Your baby's health will benefit from your decision to breastfeed. Breastfeeding is totally natural; human babies were made to breastfeed and breast milk is perfectly formulated for optimal health. Breast milk is rich in proteins, essential fats, vitamins, minerals and antibodies that protect your newborn from bacteria and viruses. It provides the best possible nutrition for your baby with no expensive

formula to buy or time spent preparing bottles. When you are first learning to breastfeed there are a few helpful guidelines that can ensure a comfortable and nurturing experience for you and your baby.

Breast milk is
free, convenient,
and naturally
healthy for your
baby.

Breast Milk's Perfect Balance:



Proteins—A perfect balance for fighting infection and promoting quick and easy digestion.



Fats—Essential fats for brain, nervous system, and eye development.



Carbohydrates—Lactose, for fighting disease, promoting healthy digestive bacteria, and absorbing minerals.



Vitamins and Minerals—These nutrients are vital for health. Calcium and iron from breast milk are more easily absorbed.



Breast milk also has many important antibodies, living cells, enzymes and hormones that cannot be artificially added to formula.

Stages of Perfect Nutrition

After your baby is born, your body naturally produces different types of breast milk in stages that coincide perfectly with the nutritional needs of your baby at the different stages of development.

STAGE ONE: THE FIRST 1-3 DAYS

Your Baby's Health: The first milk your body produces is called *colostrum*. In addition to building your baby's immune system, this milk coats your newborn's intestines with a substance that prevents infections. It also acts as a laxative to help your baby expel the first tar-like stool called meconium, which reduces the occurrence of jaundice.

Guidance for Mom: For the first few days after giving birth your breasts will remain soft and produce colostrum. Don't be surprised if it is not the color of milk you expected, as colostrum comes in many shades of yellow. And don't worry if the amount you are producing is small—that's normal, too. Colostrum is extra rich in nutrients and antibodies, and is perfect for your baby's first meals.



GETTING STARTED

Get comfortable. Find a position that encourages you to keep good posture in order to avoid strained muscles. Use pillows for your back and arms and stools for your feet, if needed.

Position your baby chest to chest. Baby's mouth and nose should face the nipple. The baby should not have to turn his head to grasp the nipple.

Encourage your baby to open his mouth wide by stroking his lips with your

nipple. When his mouth is open wide, bring him quickly to the breast, so that his chin touches the breast first.

There are many correct position options for breastfeeding. Feel

free to experiment! [La Leche League's website](#) has photos of various positions so you can select which position feels most comfortable to you and your baby. There are also many free breastfeeding instruction videos available online for additional help.

Tips for Beginning Nursing



Relax! Turn on some peaceful music, breathe deeply and take your time. Your body will help you relax by releasing calming hormones every time you breastfeed.



Positioning: Hold your baby so your chest is touching his chest. This will encourage proper latching and prevent soreness.



Latching: Creating a good latch is an important beginning step for effective breastfeeding. See the sidebar on pg. 5.



Drink a glass of water, juice, or milk every time you nurse to stay well hydrated. Your body needs nutrients and energy to make breast milk, so keep up healthy pregnancy eating habits and vitamin intake.

NIPPLE CARE

Breastfeeding should be a comfortable and pleasant bonding experience. Follow these

guidelines to keep your nipples healthy.

Ensure that your baby is latching correctly (see sidebar).

After breastfeeding, express a little breast milk and massage it into your nipples and areola. Air dry.

Leave breasts open to the air as much as possible.

Don't use soap, alcohol or creams on your breasts. Water is all that is needed for cleaning.

Use properly fitting, soft bras *without underwire* or other points of pressure.

Avoid breast pads lined in plastic. Use washable cotton cloth pads or disposable cotton pads.

If nipples become dry or cracked, you can use a hypoallergenic lanolin product.

Tips For a Good Latch

Breastfeeding should not be painful. If you feel discomfort, check your baby's mouth position.



The baby's mouth should be wide open with the lips flanged outward.



If the baby's bottom lip is not outward, put your finger into the corner of her mouth and gently turn the lip out.



Your baby's cheeks should be rounded, and her chin touching your breast.



When sucking, the baby's entire jaw should be moving and you may see her ears move up and down.



When sucking, you should hear swallowing, not clicking or smacking.



STAGE TWO: DAY 3 THROUGH DAY 6

Your Baby's Health: As your baby's nutritional needs change, so does your milk. It looks thinner and more plentiful in this transitional stage. Your baby will want to breastfeed every 1-3 hours, and will produce about six wet diapers and three bowel movements in a 24-hour period by the end of the first week.

Guidance for Mom: As colostrum changes to mature milk, your breasts become full, firm and warm. They may become

engorged and tender. Your baby will help you manage engorgement by removing your milk frequently. It's important to breastfeed at least 8-12 times each 24 hours. For especially full ducts in one area of the breast, take advantage of your baby's powerful suck. Place her in a nursing position where her nose points toward the engorged area. Gently massage ducts from the outside of the breast toward the nipple while your baby is nursing to help prevent clogging.

Keeping Breasts Healthy

There are steps you can take to keep your breasts healthy and prevent any infections.



Avoid early use of bottles and pacifiers that may discourage complete emptying of the breast.



Allow your baby to nurse on demand without limiting feeding time.



Warm showers before breastfeeding encourages milk let-down and soothes engorgement.



If engorgement is severe, you are in pain, or your baby has difficulty latching on, call your provider or a Birthing Center lactation consultant.

STAGE THREE: AFTER DAY 6

Your Baby's Health: Your mature milk production is in full force! A healthy baby breastfeeds every 1 to 3 hours and will feed at least ten minutes on each breast. Your baby should be calm and content after feeding.

Guidance for Mom:

Again, it is important for your comfort to breast-feed frequently to prevent engorgement. Any nipple soreness should begin to subside.

Questions: Any time you have a question, call the Birthing Center at 503.435.6400. There are no wrong questions—we are here to help!

If you experience any of the following, contact a healthcare professional:

- Severe and painful engorgement
- Baby has difficulty latching on
- Red and sore nipples
- A fever over 101 degrees

Helpful Resources

Willamette Valley Medical Center's Birthing

Center has certified lactation consultants available to answer any questions. Simple consultations are offered at no charge and can be arranged by calling 503.435.6400.

La Leche League International strives to help mothers worldwide to breastfeed through mother-to-mother support, encouragement, information, and education, and to promote a better understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in healthy development.

The American Academy of Pediatrics

advocates for children through the protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding. Their site contains information for families about breastfeeding recommendations, advocacy materials, and the importance of breastfeeding.

Resources:

La Leche League International, www.llli.org

American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org

Childbirth Graphics, www.childbirthgraphics.com

Medela, Inc., www.medelabreastfeedingus.com

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