

# The First Feeding: Let Baby Lead the Way



A baby who is held naked on mom's skin immediately after birth will look for the breast and often begins breastfeeding within one hour. Given enough time, many babies will self-attach to the breast. This is the ideal time for your baby's first feeding. Breastfeeding right after birth helps you produce more breastmilk and boosts your baby's immune system.

## Why start with breastfeeding right after birth?

- + Colostrum (first milk) helps baby fight germs. It's baby's first immunization!
- + Colostrum prepares baby's tummy for mature milk that comes after the second day.
- + Early breastfeeding helps you make more milk sooner.
- + Early and frequent feeding helps you and your baby learn how to breastfeed.
- + Hormones produced while breastfeeding help your uterus contract and reduce bleeding.

## Watch for feeding readiness immediately after birth:

- + Baby stretches legs and pushes himself/herself toward the breast.
- + Baby bobs head with mouth open, searching for the breast.
- + Baby uses hands to touch/massage the breast.

## What if I am not sure I want to exclusively breastfeed?

- + Your baby has only one first feeding. Make it the best!
- + Babies who only breastfeed tend to be healthier.
- + Learning to breastfeed is easier in the hospital, where skilled help is available.
- + Breasts work differently than bottles. Once a bottle is given, baby may become impatient at the breast and breastfeeding may become more difficult.
- + Introducing formula lowers your milk supply and limits your choices.



### Did you know?

Colostrum is milk! It has exactly what your baby needs, and it is enough for baby, even if you cannot feel or see it.

**Questions? Ask a lactation consultant for free!**

Call 912-466-3184

In the hospital: Ask your nurse to page the lactation consultant.



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