

NEWBORN FEEDING

Feeding is one of the baby's first pleasurable experiences. There are two sources to supply nutrition to infants. One is breastfeeding; the other is bottle feeding with formula. We feel that mother's milk is the optimal source of nutrition and urge you to consider breastfeeding. There are, however, many good reasons that parents may choose to use formula. Standard infant formulas supply all of your baby's nutritional needs.

Feeding time should be enjoyable for you and your baby. Whether you breast or bottle feed, please hold your baby close. We suggest using a flexible, on-demand feeding schedule initially. This means feeding your baby whenever he is hungry, usually every 2 to 3 hours. Your baby's feeding schedule will slowly evolve. During the first two to three days after birth, many babies prefer to sleep rather than eat. During this time, you may need to wake your newborn to feed. Newborns may lose up to 10% of their birth weight during this time. Our physicians will follow your baby's feeding and weight loss closely after discharge.

Babies swallow air during feedings. Give your baby a chance to burp half way through his feeding and at the end of the feeding. Hold him upright on your shoulder and pat or rub him gently on the back. Most babies spit up some milk after feedings. These 'wet burps' are more of a mess than a serious problem.

Breast feeding is the most natural, least expensive and most convenient way to feed your baby. Breast milk also provides some protection against infection. Normal breast milk may vary in color between women; some women may have thick, yellow milk, while others have thin, bluish-white milk. Colostrum, the breast milk secreted in the first few days after birth, is a yellow color and is full of immunoglobulins for your baby. Both breasts should be used at each feeding; start the next feeding on the breast where the last feeding ended. Breast feed for ten to fifteen minutes on each side so that the baby gets the rich hind milk that comes out of the breast later in the feeding. Mothers should have a normal, well balanced diet while breastfeeding. Many drugs are excreted in the breast milk; check with us prior to taking any medications. Alcohol should be avoided.

Formula

If you choose to formula feed your baby, we recommend using one of the standard infant formulas with iron. Please be sure to follow the instructions on the formula for reconstitution (mixing). Bottles and nipples should be washed either by hand or in the dishwasher; extreme sterilization methods of the past are no longer necessary. City water does not need to be boiled prior to use. Well water should be boiled for 5 minutes to kill any bacteria (or use bottled water). This is only necessary for the first 2 months of the infant's life. Formula may be fed at room temperature or warmed by placing the filled bottle in a pan of warm water for a few minutes. Test the formula by shaking a few drops on your wrist. Do not microwave formula; this can cause 'hot spots' that can burn your baby.

Solid Foods

Your baby will receive proper nutrition through breast feeding and/or formula feeding and will not need solids until 4-6 months of age. Adding solids prior to 4 months will not help your baby sleep through the night. Though rice cereal may be recommended by your doctor earlier for a number of reasons.