



Your pregnancy is a good time to discuss:

The birth

Talk to your midwife and doctor about choosing pain relief so that your baby is awake, alert, and ready to get to know you. Holding your baby with skin-to-skin contact immediately after birth keeps your baby warm and calm. After a little rest on your chest, your baby will start to look for your breast naturally.

Keeping your baby near (rooming-in)

When you and your baby stay near, you learn your baby's signs of hunger or when your baby wants a cuddle. Feeding is easier when your baby is not crying while waiting to come from the nursery to you. Your baby is less likely to get infections from other people if your baby is with you. You are more confident about caring for your baby when you go home.



Breastfeeding your baby

Both you and your baby can enjoy breastfeeding. It is healthy and helps to protect your baby from many serious illnesses and allergies as a baby and also later in life. It helps your baby to develop well. Breastfeeding can help to protect you from breast cancer and hip fractures in later life. It also uses up the fat that your body stored during pregnancy helping you to get back in shape. Breastfeeding is free and needs no preparation.



While you are pregnant, talk to mothers who have breastfed, your midwife, and other health workers about any concerns that you have about managing to breastfeed. If you are not planning to breastfeed this baby, find out what are the differences between formula (whey or casein base), the cost of using formula, the safety of your water supply, and the equipment needed. On the postnatal ward you will learn how to prepare and give formula safely, and how to sterilise the feeding equipment.

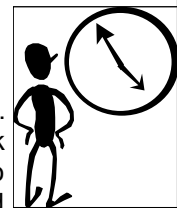
How to feed your baby

You need to be in a comfortable position for feeding. Your baby needs to be positioned turned towards you so that it is easy for him or her to take a big mouthful of breast without turning his or her head. Bring your baby to your breast rather than bringing the breast to the baby.

The way that your baby is positioned and attached to your breast is important. It helps your baby to get enough milk and helps your nipples and breast to be comfortable. The midwives will help you when your baby is born, just ask.

When to feed your baby

Your baby cannot read a clock. When your baby is hungry, she or he wants to feed - now. This is called "demand feeding" or "baby-led feeding". Baby-led feeding helps your milk supply to develop and helps your baby to gain weight. In the first few weeks it is easier to go with your baby's feeding style. Each feed may be a different length. Let your baby feed until he or she is finished and lets go.



Avoiding bottles, teats and dummies

Your milk is all that your baby needs for the first six months. Giving baby extra feeds of formula can result in your breasts making less milk. Some babies have problems digesting formula. A baby may find it hard to learn to suck both at the breast and on a bottle teat and may be hard to feed. If your baby is sucking on a dummy, baby may not spend enough time feeding to gain weight well. During your pregnancy, talk to mothers about other ways of soothing a baby than with a dummy. Learn some calming songs or how to massage your baby.



What support is available

During your pregnancy try to meet your public health nurse at your local child health clinic. Visit a mother support group. Talk to your partner and family about what they expect after the baby comes and what you expect.

