



Five Keys to Successful Breastfeeding



Keep your baby skin- to-skin with you until after the first feeding

The first feeding sets the pace for the next several feedings. During the first hour right after birth, babies are often awake and ready to feed. To take advantage of this special time, the nurses at Heritage Valley Health System will delay the eye treatment, weight, and routine injections until after the first feeding, if possible. Your partner can do skin-to-skin too, especially if you have had a cesarean and skin-to-skin may be delayed a bit. Ask your nurse for assistance.



Room in with your baby

Keep your baby with you during your hospital stay so you can learn your baby's cues and feed whenever he seems hungry. Babies typically feed 8-12 times each 24 hour day for the first several weeks.



Avoid supplementary feedings

All your baby needs is you! Rarely is there a baby who needs more than the breast in the first 24 hours. Offer the breast often. The fast flow and different feel of a bottle nipple can confuse babies and make subsequent feedings difficult. Breastfeed whenever your baby seems hungry, at least every 2-3 hours. Observe your baby for feeding cues: mouthing, sticking the tongue out, bringing hands to the face and offer the breast – before he begins crying.

If supplements become medically necessary, ask for assistance from a lactation consultant about maintaining your breastmilk supply and ways to provide the supplement in a way that will not jeopardize subsequent breastfeeding.



Limit the use of pacifiers and swaddling

Anytime your baby seems hungry, offer the breast. In-between, continue skin- to- skin holding. Later your pediatrician may recommend the use of a pacifier to reduce the risks of SIDs, but not until breastfeeding is well established.

Research shows that babies who are constantly swaddled do not wake up as often for feeding. Frequent feedings in these early days assures that you will bring in an abundant milk supply and your baby will feed adequately.



Ask for help

If things don't seem to be going well, or your breasts become sore, ask to see the lactation consultant in the hospital. She can watch a feeding and give you tips on how to hold your baby at the breast. When you get home, contact a breastfeeding support group, a lactation consultant in the community, or other breastfeeding assistance.