

18–22 weeks

Benefits of breastfeeding • Getting ready to breastfeed
Bonding with your baby • The importance of position and latch





Benefits of breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the healthiest and safest way to feed your baby.

When you choose to breastfeed, you do not have to worry if your breast milk is spoiled or contaminated and it is always the right temperature. Breast milk is always fresh and contains the right ingredients for your baby.

Breastfeeding is good for mom and baby because it...

- Improves baby's health and well-being
- Allows mom and baby to bond
- Is free, so families don't have to spend money on expensive formula
- Reduces medical bills
- Does much, much more! Talk to your provider to learn more about the benefits of breastfeeding for you and your baby.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes the important benefits of breastfeeding and recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life. At six months, continue breastfeeding while introducing solid foods as complementary foods. Continue breastfeeding until one year of life, or as long as you and your child mutually agree.

Questions for your healthcare provider:

- What are the health benefits for moms who breastfeed, and how could they affect me?
- What is the impact of breastfeeding on my baby's health?
- Is there a nutritional difference between breastmilk and formula?





Getting ready to breastfeed

Is your body getting ready to breastfeed?

- One of the first signs of pregnancy is tender breasts. Your breasts may grow as they get ready to produce milk. The areola (darker-colored skin around your nipple) may get larger.
- By 16 weeks gestation, the breast is able to secrete its first milk, also called colostrum.
- The next part of the process, transitioning to full milk production, begins with the delivery of your baby.
- The veins along your breasts may become more prominent.
- Your Montgomery's glands, tiny bumps on your areola, may appear more raised and prominent.

Women experience these changes differently, and some more than others.

Questions for your healthcare provider:

- I haven't noticed any changes to my breasts. Is that normal?
- My nipples are flat or inverted. Can you connect me to a lactation consultant?
- I had difficulty breastfeeding my first baby. Will I have the same problems this time?

Bonding with your baby (rooming-in & skin-to-skin)

Hug me, I'm yours!

After delivery, your nurse, doctor, or midwife will place your baby skin-to-skin on your chest. During the first two hours after birth, babies are alert and awake. This is a special time that allows you and your baby to get to know each other and it promotes breastfeeding.

Skin-to-skin contact might also be possible if you deliver by C-section. The nurses and doctors will help you start skin-to-skin contact as soon as you and baby are stable and safe. This might even occur in the operating room during your surgery.

Your baby will more easily adjust to his or her new environment when held skin-to-skin. Skin-to-skin contact promotes bonding, breastfeeding, temperature and blood-sugar stability, and infant brain development.

Keep me close!

Get to know your baby and let your baby get to know you by rooming-in. This means that after delivery, your baby stays in the room with you instead of in the nursery. By keeping your baby near you, you quickly learn how to care for your baby, how to hold and comfort your baby, and how to know when your baby needs to be fed. This is important even at night.

Questions for your healthcare provider:

- I've heard skin-to-skin is best for my baby. What are some specific health benefits?
- I imagine I'll be tired after delivery. Will rooming-in keep me from sleeping?





The importance of position and latch

Babies are born to breastfeed.

Once you have found a comfortable position, you are ready to breastfeed. If you are comfortable, then your baby feels more at ease and will be better able to attach properly.

When your baby is positioned comfortably, he or she will attach to the breast better. A good latch is crucial for your comfort and better facilitates milk transfer, ensuring a satisfied baby and a good milk supply.

Good position and latch are important for successful breastfeeding. We highly encourage enrolling in a breastfeeding class or making an appointment with a lactation consultant if you have specific breastfeeding concerns.

Questions for your healthcare provider:

- I thought breastfeeding was instinctual for babies. Won't my baby know how to latch on?
- I'm a hands-on learner. Won't it be better if I just learn once my baby is born?