



GETTING STARTED WITH *breastfeeding*

Learning to breastfeed doesn't happen immediately. Here's what to focus on in the first 24-48 hours.

continuous skin-to-skin contact

Skin-to-skin contact is your baby's "natural habitat"! Humans are mammals, and mammals *need* skin to skin contact with their parents in order to thrive- and figure out how to breastfeed. In the first 24 hours, your baby should be held skin-to-skin as much as possible. Avoid dressing your baby in more than a diaper and keep them on your chest. When you need a break, have your partner step in to do skin-to-skin with baby.

stay together

Keep your baby close with you in your room for the best breastfeeding outcomes in the first 48 hours. When baby is nearby, you're better able to respond to their hunger cues, which will help keep their blood sugar levels stable and help your milk supply come in. If baby needs to go to the nursery, go with them or send your partner and keep contact as much as possible,

go at your baby's pace

Your baby is new at this- just like you are. For the first day or two, many babies haven't quite figured out how to latch and feed, and they need lots of practice to do so. Be patient and don't expect immediate success. At first, they may just want to lick, nuzzle, and give a few brief sucks at the breast before falling asleep. This is okay! Talk to a lactation consultant about ways to keep baby more engaged and suckling at the breast.

delay procedures

Depending on what tests and procedures are standard in your hospital, you may have the option to delay some or all of them to prioritize skin-to-skin and breastfeeding. Ask that the newborn exam be delayed at least an hour after delivery (the "golden hour"), and skip non-essential procedures like bathing or footprints for as long as possible in order to give your baby plenty of time for breastfeeding.

avoid supplements

Newborns are designed to feed *often*- so often that you may begin to question whether or not they're getting enough to eat. This is normal! In the first 48 hours, there is very rarely a need to supplement as your milk generally doesn't arrive until 3-5 days after birth. Supplements can lead to your baby feeling too full to want to breastfeed, which can result in a delay in your milk arriving. If possible, avoid supplements until your milk arrives!

skip artificial nipples

The sucking motion that your baby makes at the breast is very different than the motion they use to suck on a pacifier or bottle. While your baby is learning an effective sucking pattern at the breast, it's best to skip artificial nipples as this can teach them an improper (and often painful) latch at the breast. In the first few weeks, allow your baby to feed (and pacify) at the breast as much as they'd like before introducing artificial nipples.