

GUIDELINES FOR WOMEN WISHING TO BREASTFEED

We are delighted you are planning to breastfeed your baby. To help you as much as we can, our staff will provide you with advice and support before and after the birth of your baby. To help ensure that your breastfeeding experience is both successful and fulfilling for you, we have developed this fact-sheet to guide you along.

Before your baby is born, take every opportunity to join your friends and relatives who are breastfeeding so that you can benefit from their experiences. Please feel free to participate in our Parent Education groups – they are there to help you.

The first breastfeed may seem a daunting idea, so a midwife will be on hand to help you. Your midwife will be happy to provide you with any further help and advice.

Tiring though it may seem, keep your baby with you as much as possible, day and night, in the first weeks.

Frequent feeding in the early days is necessary to establish and maintain the supply of your breast milk. There is no standard amount of times to feed your baby, or length of time for a feed. Even though you will be tired, try to feed your baby on demand day and night in the early days. Your baby should be breastfed *at least* every four hours. It is not unusual to feed ten times in 24 hours.

Contrary to popular myth, there is no need to alter your diet for the purpose of breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding is the most natural thing in the world. If, however, you feel uncomfortable breastfeeding in front of visitors, simply ask them to leave the room. Mother and baby come first!

Don't worry about the amount of milk the baby is getting. In the first few days after birth your baby will get enough nourishment from the colostrum. Wet nappies and 'breastfed' stools show that your baby is getting enough milk. By the end of the first week, your milk supply will be well established.

It is normal for your baby to lose up to 10% of birth weight in the first week of life.

We advise that bottles are not introduced to your baby while breast feeding. This can be an irreversible step and often an inappropriate answer to a simple problem.

Be confident about your ability to breastfeed your own baby and try not to let anyone undermine you. Please take every opportunity to avail of the help provided by postnatal support groups.

At home, if you have any concerns or questions at all, please contact the Parent Education Department on 01 4085214 to arrange to speak with someone.

Above all, enjoy this special time in your life!

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