



## Prepare for Breastfeeding Success — Make Sure You and Your Health Care Professional Have All of the Facts!

Prepare for breastfeeding success by talking with your doctor about the following:

**1. Breastfeeding is your choice, but it should be fully informed.**

Your doctor should tell you the benefits of breastfeeding and the risks of artificial feeding (formula feeding) so that you can make an educated decision about how to feed your baby.

**2. Everyone involved with the baby and mother need to be educated about and supportive of breastfeeding.**

Make sure the father of the baby and other caregivers are educated about and supportive of breastfeeding. Choose a health professional for you and your baby who is supportive of breastfeeding and able to help you should problems arise.

**3. If possible, ask your doctor to avoid procedures during birth that may interfere with breastfeeding.**

**4. Ask the doctors and nurses to place your baby skin to skin with you immediately after birth (the baby must be healthy and alert) so that you can breastfeed.**

Most babies are able to accomplish the first feeding without help from others. Doctors and nurses can dry the baby, assign APGAR scores, and do an initial physical exam while the baby is with you. Other necessary procedures may be delayed until after the first feeding.

**5. Ask the doctors and nurses not to supplement your baby with water, glucose water, formula, or other fluids unless medically indicated.**

If supplementation is needed, it should ONLY be ordered by your baby's doctor.

**6. Try not to give the baby a pacifier while breastfeeding is being established (a few weeks to 1 month after birth).**

Pacifiers can interfere with breastfeeding in some babies.

**7. Make sure that breastfeeding is being observed and documented by a physician, nurse, resident, or lactation consultant in the hospital.**

Ideally this would take place 2 times per day and should always be documented in your baby's health record.

**8. All breastfeeding newborns should be seen by their primary health care provider (pediatrician) 3–5 days after birth (or 48–72 hours post-discharge).**

Ask your doctor about scheduling this appointment before or immediately after you leave the hospital. The doctor should check for jaundice, weigh the baby, ask you about the number of times your baby pees and poops per day, and how often you are breastfeeding. You should also allow the doctor or nurse to observe breastfeeding to make sure everything is going well.

**9. Breastfed babies should be seen again by their primary care provider at 2–3 weeks after birth to check weight again and make sure you and your baby are doing well during this time of lots of changes!**

**10. Babies need nothing to eat but their mother's milk for about 6 months.**

This means that your baby will grow well and be healthy without any other foods or fluids. Talk to your doctor about the appropriate time to start feeding solid foods and how to do it.

**11. Vitamin K will be given to your baby in the form of a shot at birth (after the first feeding).**

You need to supplement your breastfed baby with Vitamin D (400 IUs per day). Talk to your doctor about how to give your baby Vitamin D.

**12. Fluoride should not be given to babies under the age of 6 months.**

Beyond that time, discuss the need for fluoride supplementation with your doctor.

**13. If you and your baby need to be separated for any reason (medical, deployment, return to work, etc.), every effort should be made by your doctors and employer to maintain breastfeeding through breast pumping and/or creative scheduling.**

Ask your obstetrician, family physician, or pediatrician for support if needed.

**14. Talk to your employer about your desire to continue breastfeeding after returning to work.**

Mothers who continue to give their baby's breast milk after returning to work or school find that they worry less about their baby and are better able to focus on their work. By drinking breast milk, babies continue to benefit from fewer trips to the doctors for illness. It is worth the extra effort to pump milk during break time as long as your baby likes to nurse during the hours you are apart. It is likely that you will find that you need to pump less and take less break time as your baby grows and nurses less often.