

Feeding Your Newborn Baby

(This document focusses on chest/breastfeeding, please inquire re bottle feeding.)

Chest/breastfeeding can be hard and often has a 6-8 week learning curve. Give yourself patience and time to learn this new skill. Make sure to stay hydrated, eat well, and rest when you can.

Colostrum AKA “liquid gold”

- Produced in the body from 16-20 weeks prenatally until 3-5 days postpartum
- Not enough to sustain baby's weight, which is normal (all babies lose weight after delivery for the first few days and take about 2 weeks to return to original birth weight). Colostrum has many antibodies for baby and is a mild laxative which helps clear meconium and reduces jaundice
- Many people think they don't have enough milk when they just see a few small drops of colostrum but it is usually exactly what your baby needs until your milk comes in

Milk

- Production starts 3-5 days after your babe is born
- When your milk starts to come in, you may become engorged - firm, lumpy, sore, and warm. It's a great sign that your milk is coming in properly! And will only last ~24-48 hours. Use *warm compresses* before feeding, *massage* during feeds and *cold compresses* after feeds

Important Feeding Information

- Babies need to feed 8-12 times in 24 hours, so feeding is about every 2-3 hours (from the start of the feed to the start of the next feed). Sometimes babies will feed more frequently, especially before the milk comes in, so bring baby to the breast whenever they ask for it
- Frequent stimulation and emptying will dictate your supply for the rest of the time you are chestfeeding. This is *the most important thing* that brings in AND maintains your milk supply
- Try and feed on both sides most feeds, 10-15 minutes/side - sometimes baby will feed on only one and that's ok! Aim for both sides most feeds
- Bring baby to your nipple and not nipple to baby, this will mean more comfortable positioning for you. Remember these things when setting up for feed: tummy to tummy, and nipple to nose
- It is common to feel a strong tugging or pulling sensation. But, sharp, pinching pain is not ok! This can lead to nipple damage and more difficulty at future feeds. Take baby off, readjust, take a big breath, relax your shoulders away from your ears and try latching again
- Things to be looking for: wide open mouth; flanged lips; babe's cheeks are rounded, not sucked in; baby takes a big mouthful, going over and beyond the nipple; active sucking with pauses to swallow (when the milk is in) and not just soothing-sucking (which looks like babe is sucking on a pacifier)
- Babies can get sleepy at your chest - take off their clothes, rub their feet, rub their head, rub a cold cloth down their back, put your cold hand under their armpit, change their diaper. These stimulation techniques can help. Once your milk is in this becomes much easier

- Timing of hand expression/pumping sessions is the same as feeding if baby is in the NICU or baby is unable to feed. Hand expression is often more effective than pumping in the early days. Pump/express every 3 hours for 10-15 minutes on each side. Turn the setting of the pump to a level that is just below what starts to feel uncomfortable. Use your hands on your breasts and massage while pumping, can help empty the breasts better
- Use a bit of expressed colostrum/milk, air time and/or Lanolin after every latch or pump for the first few days to help your nipples adjust to their new role

Helpful Websites

- firstdroplets.com
- KellyMom.com
- llc.ca
- ibconline.ca
- globalhealthmedia.org/portfolio-items/breastfeeding-attachment
- healthlinkbc.ca/babys-best-chance