

Getting Support from Hospital Staff

Let your doctor, midwife, and nurses know that the first hour or two after birth are very important for you and your baby. After they assess your baby, ask that they delay routine procedures until after your first breastfeeding. Some procedures that can usually wait:

- ♥ Bathing the baby
- ♥ Weighing the baby
- ♥ Antibiotics drops in the eye (which cloud baby's eyes and make it hard for baby to see you)

Other Things you Can Do

- ♥ Read all you can during your pregnancy to learn about breastfeed.
- ♥ Avoid taking a shower in the first 24 hours. Your special aromas are very pleasing to baby and help him learn to breastfeed.
- ♥ Avoid products with strong smells (such as perfumes and deodorants) in the first few days. These products can be very strong and confusing to baby while he's learning your special scent.
- ♥ Ask visitors to wait until after your snuggle time with baby in the first hour or two to see you. This is a special time for just you, your baby, and the baby's father to cuddle together.

How to get help

If you have questions or need help with breastfeeding, contact an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC). Lactation consultants are health professionals with knowledge and experience to help breastfeeding families. They can help you know how breastfeeding is going, answer your questions, help you find solutions, and give you options that help you meet your breastfeeding goals.



To reach an IBCLC in your area, contact:

Margie Thorne, RN, BSN, IBCLC
Asotin County Health District
431 Elm Street
Clarkston, WA 99403
(509) 758-3344

Or Visit the
"Find a Lactation Consultant Directory" at the
website of the International Lactation Consultant
Association: www.ilca.org.

Breastfeeding:

The 1st Hour-
Welcome
Baby Softly

Especially
for
Mothers

The first moments after the birth of your baby are a special time. For you and the baby's father, it can be a time of great excitement. For your baby, it can be a little overwhelming to suddenly leave the warmth of your body and face the bright lights, noises and cold surroundings of a delivery room.

What your baby wants MOST is to be back in your arms and close to your heart to hear your heartbeat and your voice and get to know you and dad. Your baby will use all five senses to learn about this new world and to get ready to breastfeed.

Why the 1st Hour is so Important

Right after birth, babies are especially alert and ready to get to know you. In the first hour or two after birth, baby's senses are on special alert to connect with you in special ways.

Sight

The first thing your baby wants to do after birth is to look at you. Newborns are able to see a distance of around 8-12 inches...about the same distance from baby to mother's face when being held to breastfeed. Newborns love to look at faces, and will spend the first few moments exploring the outline of your face and then gazing at your eyes. Your baby thinks you are the most beautiful person in the world!

Hearing

While your baby is looking at you, talk softly so baby knows you are the mother. Your baby already recognizes the sound of your voices, and when you speak or sing softly, baby is excited to know this is mother and father!

Smell

Babies have a sharp sense of smell after birth, and especially love the smell of the amniotic fluid they have been swimming in during pregnancy. After birth, baby uses his tiny hands to spread amniotic fluid against your skin to guide him into finding the breast.

Taste

Babies have lots of taste buds, and they especially prefer the flavor of your colostrums, the first milk you make in the early days after baby is born. Colostrum reminds baby of amniotic fluid, and baby will eagerly seek this taste of mother's milk right after birth.



Touch

Your baby was snuggled within your uterus and amniotic fluid during pregnancy. After birth, your baby longs to stay in close contact with your body. Holding your baby "skin-to-skin" in the first hour or two after birth helps your baby stay calm and comforted while learning about this new world.

Skin-to Skin

Hold your baby skin-to-skin right after birth so baby can use all five senses to get to know you. Here's how it works:

1. The nurse should wipe the baby off (so baby does not become cold when the moisture evaporates).
2. Snuggle your baby with his bare chest against your bare chest, in that cozy valley between your breasts. Baby's head is lying on your breast bone, or sternum.
3. Drape a blanket or your gown across the baby's back to keep both you and your baby warm, and bring the bed covers up over you both.

4. While you and your baby are snuggling together, the nurse will stay in the room to make sure you and the baby are safe.

Your body will warm your baby better than baby blankets or an incubator, and will keep baby calm and happy. Holding baby skin-to-skin even works as a natural pain reliever....babies do not feel pain as sharply when they are held skin-to-skin with their mothers. Ask if the hospital staff can do any needed medical procedures while you are holding your baby skin-to-skin.

Helping Baby Breastfeed

After resting for awhile on your bare chest, baby will begin to move down toward your breast to get a better look at you! This period of gazing may last around 10 minutes or so. Baby will show he's ready to start searching for the breast when you see baby make sucking movements or bring his hand to his mouth. Rather than helping baby latch, follow your baby's lead and just watch while baby seeks, your breast on his own. At first he may just lick around the nipple. This is how baby is learning to use the tongue to breastfeed properly. Wait while baby licks and then learns to place the tongue underneath the breast. Allow baby to feed at the breast for as long as he wants.

If you had medications during your labor and delivery, it may take baby a little longer to be ready to feed. Keeping your baby skin-to-skin with you will help your baby become more alert and interested in breastfeeding.

