

How will my baby receive my milk?

If your baby is too premature to feed by mouth, your baby will be fed your milk with a feeding tube that is inserted through the mouth or nose, down the esophagus and into the stomach. Your baby will begin to coordinate suck-swallow-breathe usually between 32 and 38 weeks. This is very individual and depends on many things.

What about Kangaroo Care?

You can help your baby with Kangaroo Care. Ask your baby's nurse for the pamphlet on Kangaroo Care. Skin to Skin cuddling or Kangaroo Care helps your baby become familiar with the breast and your baby will know that this is a safe and happy place.

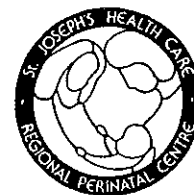
Where can I get help if I am having problems?

- Your baby's nurse in NICU has had training about breastfeeding and can help you with most problems.
- A Lactation Consultant is available almost every day and your baby's nurse can page her to set up an appointment.
- If you are at home you can call the hospital number and have the Lactation Consultant on call paged. She can speak with you directly while your baby is a patient in the hospital.
- Every Wednesday afternoon at 2:00 pm NICU mothers and a Lactation Consultant meet together in the Breastfeeding Clinic.
- You can also obtain information from your local Public Health Unit.

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Breastfeeding My Premature Baby



Why is my breastmilk so important for my Premature baby?

- ✓ Your milk is designed for your baby and premature milk is different than full term milk.
- ✓ Your milk will protect your baby from infection and will help him/her get better faster if he/she gets an infection.
- ✓ Your milk is easiest for your baby to digest.
- ✓ Your milk reduces the risk and severity of a bowel condition called necrotizing enterocolitis.
- ✓ Your milk reduces the risk of allergies for your baby especially if there are allergies in the family.
- ✓ Your milk improves your baby's eye development.
- ✓ Your milk improves your baby's brain development.

Many mothers who were not planning to breastfeed will often consider pumping for their premature baby. Providing even a few weeks worth of breast milk is beneficial to your premature infant.

How Can I provide Breast milk for my premature baby?

Obtain the NICU handouts for instructions and talk to your baby's nurse.

- It is important to start using a hospital grade electric breast pump as soon as possible after your baby's birth (within 4-6 hours).
- While you are staying on the Mother/Baby unit, hospital grade electric breast pumps are available for your use.
- Your nurse on the Mother/Baby unit will teach you how to use the breast pump.
- When you visit your baby bring your pump kit and use the pumps available for you in NICU & NPCU.
- Before discharge you may rent a breast pump, or obtain a list of the rental stations from the Express Yourself Store.
- The Public Health Unit in your area may be able to help you.
- If you have extended health coverage through your employer, a letter for your insurance company is available to help with reimbursement of the rental fee. Ask your baby's nurse for a copy.
- A prescription for a **hospital grade electric breast pump with a double collection kit** from your doctor may also help cover costs.

1. It is important that you follow the NICU guidelines for pumping. You need to **pump 10 times in 24 hours**. Remember if you gave birth to a full term baby you would breastfeed at least 10 times in 24 hours in the first few weeks to get a good milk supply. It is important to keep track of how much milk you are making so fill in your milk record and bring it to the NICU when you visit.
2. For the first 3 days you may not collect much colostrum or breast milk. This is normal. However, you must pump often to keep hormone levels high so that your breasts will make milk. You may find that after pumping you will get more colostrum if you hand express. Ask your baby's nurse to teach you how to use this technique.
3. For storage information refer to the NICU handouts. Sterile Bottles will be provided for you from NICU. Ask your baby's nurse for Bottles and labels.
4. There are many safe medications that you can take while you are breastfeeding. However, it is important that the health care team caring for your baby is aware whenever you are taking a medication, while providing breast milk for your baby.