

# Newborn Care

Welcome to the wonderful world of parenting a child. There are so many things to learn about being a parent – no matter what the age of the child. This section will focus on the care specific to a newborn infant. For further information, please ask your physician, nurse, or call Billings Clinic HealthLine at 255-8400 or 1-800-252-1246.

## Breastfeeding

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Your breast milk is the ideal food for your baby with benefits not only for your baby, but for you as well. If you choose to breastfeed, please be patient with yourself and your baby. It is normal for the baby's first feedings to feel less than perfect and it is important to realize that breastfeeding is a learned art. Before you know it, you will be an expert.

## How to Breastfeed

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First, settle into a comfortable position for both you and your infant. Begin each feeding with the same breast on which your baby finished nursing at the previous feeding. By doing this, you will be alternating the breast that is offered first each time you nurse. Breastfed infants should nurse approximately 15-20 minutes on each breast, every two to three hours. Occasionally, more frequent nursing, every one to two hours, helps to build up your milk supply. There may be days in the first few weeks of your baby's life when he/she wants to nurse more often than usual. This is normal and is related to the increased nutritional need of a growing baby. The frequency of the infant's feeding relays a message to the mother's brain prompting an increase in milk production. For the first several weeks, your baby may be irregular in his/her time between feedings. Most infants will nurse about eight to twelve times in 24 hours. You can be sure that your child is receiving enough milk if he/she is:

- Feeding every two to four hours.
- Wetting five to six diapers a day.
- Stooling four or more times a day in the first three to six weeks of life. After that, it can be normal for the baby to stool as seldom as once a week as long as your baby is receiving **only** breast milk. A breastfed infant's intestines quickly matures to utilize 90-100% of human milk. This does not happen, however with formula.
- Active and eager.

Women who provide milk for their babies use 300-500 extra calories a day. Breastfeeding is a great way to lose extra weight. Be sure to eat as healthfully as you did while you were pregnant. It is necessary for you and your baby! But you do not need to eat more than the equivalent of a half to a whole sandwich extra each day to provide sufficient energy while breastfeeding. You do need to drink plenty of fluids – water or juice are good choices. Continue your prenatal vitamins for as long as you are nursing. But, since prenatal vitamins generally only have about 300 mgs of calcium per tablet, you may want to

supplement with an additional 1200-1600 mgs a day. This will serve to protect your bones and teeth. Keep in mind that if you take calcium with magnesium, it will be better absorbed by your body.

## **Breast Pumps**

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All breast pumps are not created equal. Check with the Mom/Baby Shop (247-6944) for suggestions on good breast pumps.

## **Nipple Shields**

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If you are using a nipple shield, please keep the following in mind:

- 1) Typically, it is a temporary aid to help make breast feeding easier on both you and your baby.
- 2) You may find it useful to place the nipple shield in a basin of very warm water prior to use. The warm wet shield may stay on the breast better and help increase milk flow. Using Lansinoh Cream around the edges can also make it adhere more securely.
- 3) Pay attention to the baby's latch. A correct latch and suck will pull the nipple and a portion of the breast tissue into the nipple shield. This helps increase milk flow as well as milk supply.
- 4) The nipple shield should be washed with hot soapy water, rinsed and air dried between uses.
- 5) It is essential that you follow up with your lactation consultant. Weekly weight checks are suggested as you and the baby are learning to feed. Call if you have difficulties or you are concerned about your baby's behavior, 238-5083.

## **Weaning**

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Breast milk is best for infants and is recommended for as long as possible. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies be breastfed for at least the first year of life. The Surgeon General has said "it is the lucky baby who is nursed until he is two." There is no "right time" or "best time" to wean. That decision is an individual one made by each baby and mother.

It is ideal to begin the weaning process during a time free from outside stresses, since it is a time of change and adjustment for the infant. Often the infant will signal when the weaning process is to start. He/she may pull away or refuse the breast and show more interest in the foods the family members are eating during mealtimes, reaching for food off of their plates. Offer the child a cup of pumped breast milk, formula or water at the times that he/she seems least interested in breastfeeding. After your child is accustomed to receiving one daily feeding from the cup, select a second nursing session to replace it with a cup-feeding. Usually it works best to allow at least a few days between replacements of breastfeeding sessions so that your milk supply gradually diminishes. If your breasts become very full and painful, taking Sudafed, as the box suggests for 2 - 3 days, will help decrease your milk supply and make you more comfortable.

Rapid weaning, or quitting cold turkey, is not recommended. It can be very painful for mom, sometimes leading to mastitis, and also very traumatic for the baby.

It is important to remember that if mom is ready to lead the weaning that she do it in a gradual and relaxed and sympathetic manner. If your little one is having trouble with replacing a nursing session with a cup every day, then try it every other day. Gentle him, or her, into this new approach to liquid foods. And remember that to the baby, breastfeeding is NOT just about the food, but equally about the connection to the most important person in their young life, their mother! To them it can feel like being pushed away if it is all coming too fast. In that case it is the emotional loss that is more troublesome to the child than the object by which he gets his fluids.

The most important thing to remember during the weaning process is to give your child lots of extra touching, hugging, and cuddling.

If you have concerns or questions about breastfeeding, please feel free to contact Billings Clinic Lactation Consultants, at 238-5083.