Feeding your baby

Breastfeeding drop-in clinics

We believe that breastfeeding is the most natural way to feed your baby, and we recognise the important benefits that breastfeeding provides for both you and your child. Our staff will offer support and guidance in the early days. Ask your midwife about the information and support available, and our parent education classes.

If you have made an informed decision to formula feed your baby, you will be given the appropriate care and support, but the hospital does not provide formula milk, unless your baby requires it for medical reasons. In all other cases, you are expected to provide formula milk yourself.
Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding has a huge range of benefits. It has a deep impact on your baby’s survival, health, nutrition and development.

- Breast milk provides all of the nutrients, vitamins and minerals your baby needs for growth for the first six months
- No other liquids or food are needed
- Breast milk carries antibodies from you that help protect your baby from infection and disease
- The act of breastfeeding itself stimulates proper growth of your baby's mouth and jaw
- Breastfeeding creates a special bond between you and your baby
- The interaction between you and him/her during breastfeeding has positive repercussions for life, in terms of stimulation, behaviour, speech, sense of wellbeing and security, and how your child relates to other people
• Breastfeeding also lowers the risk of chronic conditions later in life, such as obesity, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, childhood asthma and childhood leukaemias
• Studies have shown that breastfed babies perform better in intelligence and behaviour tests into adulthood than formula-fed babies
• Breastfeeding also reduces your chances of getting type 2 diabetes and breast, uterine and ovarian cancer

Virtually every mother can breastfeed, if given the right support, advice and encouragement, as well as practical help to resolve any problems.

Formula milk, at its best, can only replace most of the nutritional components of breast milk. It is just a food, whereas breast milk is a complex living nutritional fluid containing antibodies, enzymes, long chain fatty acids and hormones, many of which simply cannot be included in formula.

Babies who are not breastfed have an increased chance of:

• Diarrhoea and vomiting and having to go to hospital as a result
• Chest infections and having to go to hospital as a result
• Ear infections
• Being fussy about new foods
• Being constipated
• Being obese, which means they are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes and other illnesses later in life
• Developing eczema

NCT feeding helpline

0300 330 0700 option 1, staffed by NCT Breastfeeding Counsellors and open 8:00 - 00:00 every day of the year.
Formula feeding

Before you go home you should be shown how to make up a feed and to sterilise equipment, and a safe technique to give a bottle feed. If you haven’t been shown please ask. You will be given the bottle feeding leaflet from the Department of Health which also shows you how to sterilise equipment and make up a feed. (See link below)

Even if you have had a baby already, please check as some advice may have changed.

Responsive formula feeding

It might not be appropriate to offer formula feeds as frequently as breastfeeds because of the risk of over feeding, but mothers who are bottle feeding their babies need support to do so in a responsive way.

We would like all parents to be informed about responsive formula feeding and encourage them to:

- watch out for cues that your baby is hungry, rather than adhering to a strict 3-4 hourly routine, which will enable babies to have some control over their feeding pattern
- hold your baby close during a feed so that you can look into his or her eyes
- rub the teat gently against your baby’s top lip to encourage him/her to open their mouth, invite your baby to draw in the teat in further, rather than forcing the teat into the mouth
- the teat should be full of milk to prevent sucking in too much air
- allow your baby to pace the feed, remove the teat and sit your baby up to wind him/her when they appear to want a break
- your baby should never be forced to take a full feed as this will inhibit his/her own appetite control, so try to recognise your baby’s cues that they have had enough milk
- try to limit the number of people involved with feeding your baby
- your baby should always be held and never left unattended while feeding from a bottle

Forcing babies to take a bit more milk so that they will go longer between feeds can lead to overfeeding, and should be discouraged.

Do I need to wind my baby?

If your baby shows signs of distress during the feed, encourage him or her to let go of the teat and sit them up to see if they need to bring up any wind.
Sick or premature babies may not show feeding cues, so caution is recommended to ensure that they are feeding correctly.
Baby friendly initiative

“It is well recognized that the period from birth to two years of age is the ‘critical window’ for the promotion of good growth, health, and behavioural and cognitive development. Therefore, optimal infant and young child feeding is crucial during this period. Optimal infant and young child feeding means that mothers are empowered to initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth, breastfeed exclusively for the first six months and continue to breastfeed for two years or more, together with nutritionally adequate, safe, age appropriate, responsive complementary feeding starting at six months.” UNICEF

The Rosie hospital has completed the first step towards gaining international recognition from the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative for its dedication to supporting mothers and encouraging breastfeeding.
Breastfeeding drop-in centres

The Rosie is committed to offering you support to establish breastfeeding. It should be a rewarding and satisfying experience for both you and your baby. Sometimes, mothers and babies need a little more help and there is a wide support system in the community when you leave the hospital.