

PATIENT HANDOUT

PREPARING FOR BREASTFEEDING

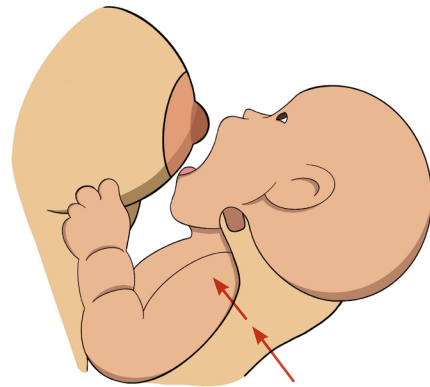
- After 36 weeks, try to hand express colostrum from your breasts. Collect and freeze any that you express. You can bring this with you to the hospital. If your newborn is slower to latch or for medical reasons is separated from you after birth, there is expressed colostrum for your baby's early feeds.
- Seek out labour support from a doula, midwife or other support person such as your husband or partner, mother or auntie. Their continuous support can reduce the need for labour medications or other birth interventions, which helps an early start to breastfeeding. [Watch this video](#) to get easy tips for labour support.
- As long as you and your baby are well, skin-to-skin with baby immediately after birth is encouraged. This early body contact stimulates your hormones to let-down your milk.



- A most comfortable and natural breastfeeding position is called the “laid-back position.” With you in a semi-sitting position, with pillows supporting you, your baby lays on your chest and can latch easily. If you have a c-section, you may prefer the side-lying, cross-cradle or football hold position.
- Know that all newborn babies lose weight in the first 24 to 36 hours, and most healthy babies return to their birth weight by about 10 to 14 days. All that most babies need is colostrum in the early days in hospital.

- A comfortable latch means that the baby's mouth is latched onto your areola and nipple (not just on the end of the nipple, which hurts). With a good latch, your breasts are stimulated to make enough milk for your baby.

Push base of hand firmly against baby's shoulders, allowing baby's head to tip slightly back with chin coming in first.



When baby's mouth is wide open like a yawn, pop baby on. Latch should be on nipple *and* areola.

- Be prepared that your baby will be feeding frequently in the early days and nights (this is called cluster feeding). Cluster feeding is important because baby's stomach is tiny, and so needs to feed small amounts, often.
- If at any point your baby needs medical supplementation, expressed colostrum or breastmilk is the first choice. Your newborn will easily feed from a little spoon or medicine cup. Feeding by a bottle is not recommended since the bottle nipple causes a different sucking motion by the baby's mouth and tongue, which causes “nipple confusion.”
- Have breastfeeding support names and numbers sourced ahead of time: a lactation consultant (a private practice IBCLC) or a La Leche League contact, and the Healthy from the Start phone number (1-855-868-7710). Midwives who are also an IBCLC are a free health service in BC, and can provide breastfeeding support six weeks before birth and six weeks afterwards.