

Breastfeeding – Getting Off to a Good Start

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organization recommend feeding your baby only breastmilk for the first 6 months, then gradually starting solid foods and continuing with breastfeeding for at least 1 year or longer.

If you have a full-term, healthy baby that is breastfeeding well, there is usually no need to give supplemental formula. By exclusively breastfeeding or providing only expressed breastmilk, you:

- Provide the best nutrition for your baby at each feeding.
- Allow your baby to learn how to latch and breastfeed well.
- Help establish a full milk supply to feed your baby.
- Decrease painful breast engorgement.
- Support your baby's immune system.
- Decrease your baby's risk of developing allergies.



Direct breastmilk feedings from the mother's breast are always preferred to any artificial source or substance.

Babies who are only fed breastmilk have a lower risk of having certain health problems. These include:

- Reduced risk for respiratory and gastrointestinal infections
- Reduced risk of autoimmune disease such as allergies, eczema, asthma, diabetes, and inflammatory bowel
- Reduced risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

(American Academy of Pediatrics, 2012)

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As you plan for your delivery and hospital stay, know that Mount Carmel has baby friendly practices to help both you and your baby get off to the best start.

Skin-to-Skin or **Kangaroo Care** means holding your baby dressed only in a diaper on your bare chest immediately after birth and as much as possible in the early days after birth.

- Calms and soothes your baby
- Helps your baby regulate a healthy body temperature
- Helps regulate your baby's heart rate, blood sugar and breathing
- Helps your baby learn to breastfeed
- Can improve your ability to make breastmilk

Delaying the Bath for 12 to 24 hours after delivery allows your baby to remain skin-to-skin.

- Reserves your baby's energy
- Helps your baby maintain normal body temperature
- Keeps your baby's stress hormones low and blood sugars normal
- Keeps a natural skin protectant on baby at birth that provides protection from infection
- Helps get breastfeeding off to a good start

Rooming In allows for your baby to stay in your room during your entire stay.

- Helps your baby cry less and be soothed more quickly
- Helps regulate heart rate, body temperature and sleep cycle
- Helps you to know when your baby is hungry
- Helps you sleep more soundly knowing your baby is in the room
- Brings breastmilk in more quickly and in higher amounts

