



Lincolnshire Maternity
& Neonatal Programme
Better Births

In partnership with

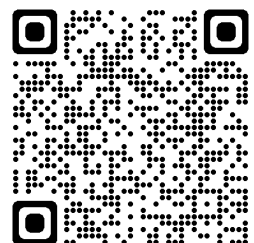
NHS
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Antenatal Toolkit

Discussion tool:
Comforting, caring for, and feeding
your baby



All of the information in this discussion tool can
be accessed from this QR code





Did you know....

Breastfeeding reduces your baby's risk of many illnesses including:

Infections



Gastroenteritis
Chest infections
Urinary tract infections
Ear infections



Insulin dependent diabetes
SIDS (Cot death)
Childhood cancers



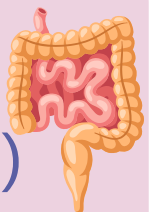
and other serious illness



Bowel disease in preterm babies



Necrotising enterocolitis (NEC)



What about mothers?

Breastfeeding also reduces mum's risk of illness including

Breast cancer
Ovarian cancer



Hip Fractures
Type 2 Diabetes



Comforting and caring for my baby

Discuss around 16 weeks



Did you know....

Your baby's brain is growing really quickly in pregnancy?



You can help your baby's brain growth by....

- ♥ Taking some time out to relax and think about your baby
- ♥ Talking to your baby
- ♥ Stroking your bump
- ♥ Noticing when your baby moves
- ♥ Encouraging other close family members to do the same



Skin to skin

Discuss at around 16 weeks



Did you know....



Skin to skin helps to stabilise your baby after the birth

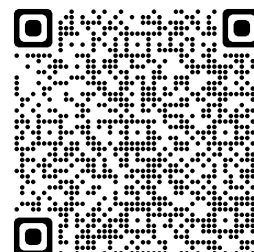
- ★ keeps baby warm
- ★ helps stabilise baby's breathing and heart rate
- ★ helps calm baby and mum
- ★ helps with bonding



You can find short videos on skin to skin and breastfeeding in the first hours here



GLOBAL
HEALTH
MEDIA



Skin to skin also helps your baby to start breastfeeding - your baby can move towards the breast by themselves and begin to suckle!

What are your experiences, feelings and questions about feeding?

Do I need to choose?



There is no need to choose how to feed your baby until after the birth; you can wait until your baby is in skin to skin.

We will help you with feeding at that time.

Pregnancy is a good time to get information on feeding.

Comforting and caring for baby

Discuss around 25-28 weeks



Did you know....

When you comfort and respond to your baby, it releases a hormone which stimulates baby's brain development



What are your experiences, feelings and questions about comforting and caring for babies?

Can you 'spoil' a baby?

We now know that you cannot 'spoil' a baby by picking them up. Instead, responding to baby will help them to become more secure and confident

Some simple things you can do to comfort and care for your baby....

- Keeping baby close to you
- Cuddling and holding baby
- Skin to skin contact
- Talking to baby
- Not leaving baby to cry
- Feeding when baby shows feeding cues

Top Tip 

Breastfeeding can be used to comfort your baby. It is ok to breastfeed frequently as breastfed babies cannot be overfed





Did you know....

Babies signal their hunger with feeding cues

It is normal for babies to feed 8 to 12 times in 24 hours

Baby feeding cues (signs)

Early cues

"I'm hungry"



Stirring



Mouth opening



Turning head
Seeking/rooting

Mid cues

"I'm really hungry"



Stretching



Increasing physical movement



Hand to mouth

Late cues

"Calm me, then feed me"



Crying



Agitated body movements



Colour turning red

Time to calm crying baby

- Cuddling
- Skin-to-skin on chest
- Talking
- Stroking



Top Tip💡

It is time to feed your baby when they show early or mid cues

Try not to wait until your baby is showing late cues or crying - it is hard for babies to feed when they are upset

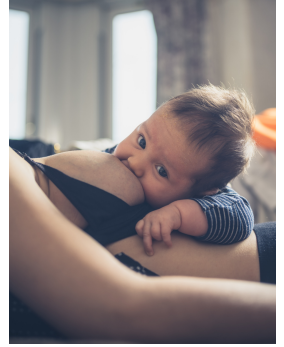
Feeding baby

Discuss around 31-34 weeks



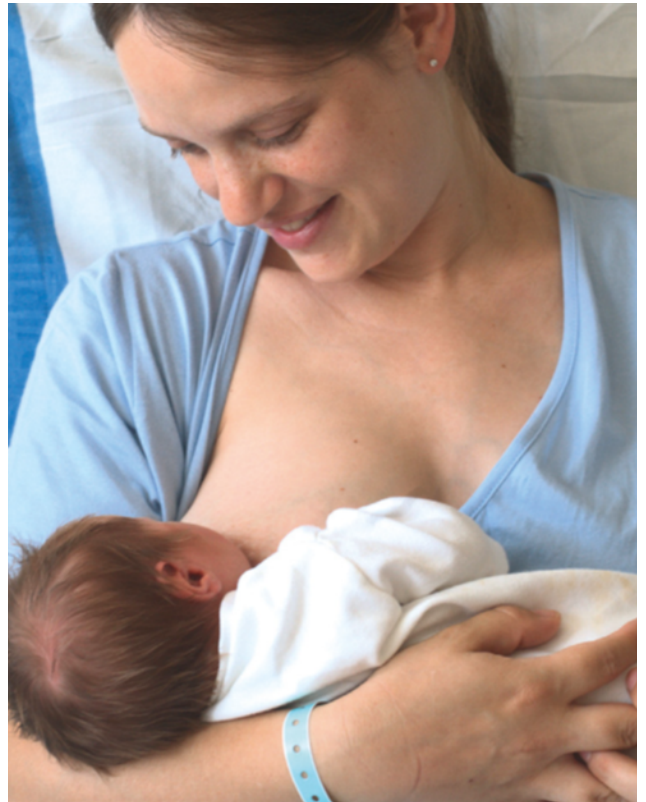
Did you know...

There are lots of different positions for breastfeeding



When holding your baby for breastfeeding you can check:

- Your baby's head and body are in a straight line
- Your baby is held close to you
- Your baby's head is able to tilt back easily
- Your baby's nose is opposite your nipple
- You are comfortable



Top Tip 

A deep comfortable latch for you also helps baby to get the milk more easily



You can find short practical videos on breastfeeding here

Feeding baby

Discuss around 31-34 weeks



Did you know....

The nipple is aimed at the roof of baby's mouth when they latch

How baby attaches to the breast

- Wait for your baby to have a wide open mouth
- Bring your baby to the breast quickly, with their chin leading
- As your baby attaches, keep baby's bottom lip well below the nipple
- Aim your nipple to the rear of the roof of your baby's mouth



Baby's lower lip well below your nipple really helps!

Signs baby is feeding well

- Feeding baby does not hurt
- Baby's chin is firmly touching the breast
- Baby's mouth is open wide
- Baby's cheeks are round
- If you can see dark skin around your nipple, more will be above the baby's top lip than below the bottom lip
- Baby takes rhythmic, long sucks and swallows
- Baby is calm and content during the feed



Baby will have a big mouthful of breast tissue below the nipple - this is a good sign!



Tips for feeding baby

Discuss around 31-34 weeks

Did you know...

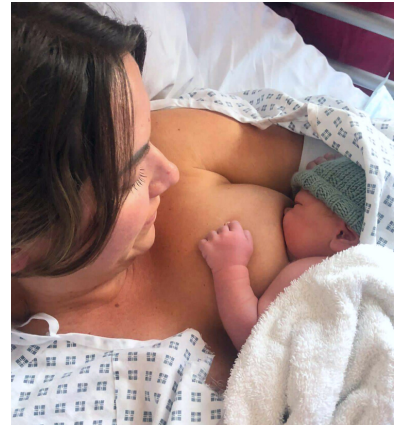
It can take time for baby to learn how to latch

Plenty of practice, patience, and support will help you both learn



Night feeds are important

The milk-making hormone is higher at night and baby's tummy is tiny, so babies need to feed often, including at night



Top Tip

Not everyone is the same!

Breasts and nipples have many shapes and sizes. This is normal. Please ask for tips when breastfeeding.

Why exclusive breastfeeding is recommended

- If baby takes less of mum's milk, they have less protection from illnesses and allergies
- Giving other food or drinks can reduce breastmilk supply, as milk is made in response to baby sucking at the breast

Preterm and ill babies



- Breastmilk is particularly important for babies on the Neonatal Unit. It reduces the risk of serious illnesses and infections. This is special protection that only you can provide.
- We encourage you to hand express as soon as possible after the birth

Antenatal hand expressing

Discuss around 36 weeks



Did you know....

You can start to collect some of your milk (colostrum) from 37 weeks in pregnancy

Top Tip

Before expressing, it helps to stimulate the milk flow by gently massaging your breasts and rolling your nipples between finger and thumb

Why hand express in pregnancy?

Stored colostrum can be useful in the early days while your baby learns to breastfeed.

Colostrum helps to stabilise baby's blood glucose and is high in antibodies.

Practicing hand expression can help build confidence and skills for feeding your baby.

How to hand express

- Cup your breast and place your thumb and finger about 2-3 cm from your nipple
- Using your thumb and the rest of your fingers in a C shape, gently but firmly compress and release in a rhythm – this should not hurt
- If colostrum does not appear after a few minutes, try moving your fingers towards your nipple or further away - find where works best for you
- Be careful not to 'slide' your fingers along as this can stop the milk flowing
- When the drips slow down, move your fingers around to express a different section of your breast and compress and release again
- When the drips slow again, move to your other breast and repeat

Remember to wash your hands before expressing



If you do not see any colostrum, don't worry, this is common. Ask your midwife to check your hand expressing technique.

Antenatal hand expressing

Discuss around 36 weeks

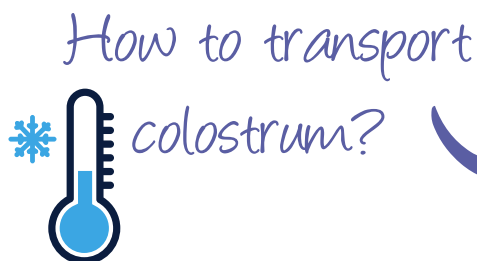


Did you know...

Hand expression after 37 weeks in pregnancy can also be useful if your labour is being induced

How to collect colostrum?

- Use colostrum syringes
- Express 2-3 times in each 24 hours period
- Keep the colostrum syringe in the fridge in between each expression
- At the end of each day, label the syringe with your name and date of expression, then store the syringe in your freezer
- Use a new syringe each day



Top Tip

Bring your frozen colostrum to hospital with you in a cool bag on an ice pack. Let the staff know immediately, so it can be stored in the freezer to prevent it from defrosting before it is needed!

Stimulating labour

If you are having your labour induced, then your midwife may suggest that you hand express and stimulate your nipples to help release hormones that help labour

What if I get some tightenings?

Towards the end of your pregnancy, you may start to feel your bump going hard and then softening, this is your womb tightening and relaxing. These are called Braxton Hicks contractions and are quite normal. This may also occur when you express and usually settles when you stop expressing.

If the contractions continue and become painful, follow the advice given by your midwife on what to do if you think your labour has started.

Sources of support

Discuss around 36 weeks



Did you know....

There are many sources of support for feeding your baby

- Midwives and Health Visitors
- Breastfeeding Groups
- The National Breastfeeding Helpline
- Specialist Midwife Infant Feeding Team



The 'off to the best start' leaflet has lots of tips and practical information

You can find leaflets and local Breastfeeding support including groups here- you are welcome at groups when you are pregnant



For specialist support, ask your midwife for a referral to the Specialist Midwife Infant Feeding Team



Partners and other support persons



Support and understanding from people close to you are important for mothers and babies.

Babies need lots of cuddles, which helps them feel secure and promotes brain growth. Partners/support persons can

help so much by soothing, comforting and playing with babies between feeds.

Top Tip

Babies who have a dummy, teat or nipple shield sometimes find it harder to attach to mum's breast. If you want to use a dummy, try to wait until breastfeeding is established at around 4-6 weeks.