



The High River Hospital holds a Baby Friendly Designation!

What is the Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI)?

- The BFI is global program that Protects, promotes and supports breastfeeding families and formula-feeding families by providing accurate information on infant feeding.

In this document, we use terms such as “mother” or “father”. However, parenting takes on many forms and some parents may wish to use other terms. This document also uses “breastfeeding” while some prefer “chestfeeding”. If this applies to you, please let us know and we will respect the terms you identify with.



Our Pledge

As healthcare providers at the High River Maternity Clinic and High River Hospital, we are committed to supporting you. We will strive to help you and your family achieve the best possible health.

- We will be **COMPETENT** providers of breastfeeding assistance through staff education.
- We will **SUPPORT** parents in information, exploration of their concerns, and provide access to resources to make informed decisions regarding infant feeding.
- We will **ENCOURAGE** the initiation of skin to skin contact at all birth including planned caesarean sections as well as breast feeding on demand.
- We will **REFRAIN** from introducing food or drink other than breastmilk to breastfed newborns, unless medical necessary.



How you can expect us to support your feeding goals?

- Immediately after delivery, your baby will be placed on your chest for skin to skin time.
- For baby's first hour of life and as much as possible thereafter, we refrain from separating you and baby to do routine procedures.
- Your partner can also hold the baby skin-to-skin if you are not able to.
- We encourage you to keep your baby with you at all times.
- Routine exams and procedures can be completed skin to skin and in your presence when able.
- Staff are educated to help support your breastfeeding goals.



The power of skin-to-skin:

- It promotes exclusive breastfeeding.
- It keeps baby warm.
- It calms and soothes baby and helps transition them to the outside world.
- It helps protect your baby from infection.
- It helps to stabilize baby's blood sugar and breathing.
- It helps to reduce pain from procedures like blood draws or injections.

Why is breastfeeding so important for families?

- Breastmilk contains components to support healthy brain development.
- Breastfeeding reduces cancer risks for lactating individuals and babies.
- Breast milk has the necessary nutrients to meet changing needs of baby.
- Breastfeeding also helps to:
 - Protect against sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
 - Protect against illness and infection (e.g., ear, lung, and stomach infections).
 - Promote dental health.
 - Provide pain relief.
 - Protect against diabetes and reduce the risk of obesity.
 - Facilitate attachment and bonding.
 - Build strong bones for lactating individuals.
 - Reduce risk of allergies.



Breastfeeding may take patience and practice. Babies have instincts and reflexes to help them breastfeed. It may take some time to feel comfortable and confident. Surround yourself with support. Feed your baby **early** and **often**, this will help you establish a milk supply.

How does breastfeeding work?

Colostrum

During pregnancy and the early days of breastfeeding, breasts produce colostrum. This is the first milk your baby receives after birth. It is a yellow or orange coloured thick fluid. Colostrum comes in small volumes which accommodate the baby's smaller stomach size and assists babies to learn to drink larger volumes. It contains all the concentrated nutrients and antibodies your baby needs. It is easy to digest and helps develop the baby's gastrointestinal and immune systems. Like all breastmilk, colostrum contains living cells.

The First Breastfeed

We support bringing babies to their mother's chest immediately after birth. Ideally, your baby will remain on your chest for the first few hours and until the first feeding. Babies have the ability to crawl to attach themselves to latch. Watch for your baby's feeding cues and support them to take the lead when they are rooting and ready to feed. If your baby is not able to feed in the first hour of life it is very important for you to express the colostrum from your breasts. Research is showing it helps you make more milk and improves your milk supply. You can feed the colostrum to your baby with a syringe spoon or your finger.

To help be successful with breastfeeding, we encourage skin-to-skin time, early feeding, and removal of colostrum. If your baby is well, other things can wait. If you are able, consider giving a few hours of skin-to-skin time and a first feeding of colostrum to your baby as their first birthday gift.



The First 24 -72 Hours

The time spent in hospital after your baby is born is focused on getting to know your newborn and learning to breastfeed. We suggest using this time to allow you and your baby to get to know and understand each other. Separation can be counterproductive to helping you meet your feeding goals.

Watch for early signs of hunger such as stretching movements and hand to mouth motions. Crying is the last feeding cue. You will need to calm your baby if they are crying. Effectively attaching your baby at the breast is important and may take time and support. Patience and persistence are effective tools if you are having difficulty. An effective latch is pain-free and will optimize the amount of milk you produce and your baby gets.

The first day babies may be sleepy and may only feed about 5 times. After that your baby will need to feed at **least** 8 times in 24 hours. The second night your baby may likely feed often and might cry if you take him away from your warm body and smell. Having 1-2 periods of cluster feeding is normal feeding behaviour at this stage and not unexpected. Place no restriction on how often a baby feeds. Feeding all the time is different from cluster feeding. Talk to your healthcare provider if you are concerned or need clarification.

You will want to ensure the baby is transferring milk; staff will help you with this. Sucking patterns change during a feed, from short quick sucks to longer, deeper, slower drawing sucks. Pausing between sucking bursts is normal and you should see the baby swallow and breathe. There is no set amount of time your baby will feed, as sucking patterns vary and appetites change from day to day depending on growth spurts. Burp your baby between breasts and offer both sides.

Breastmilk responds and changes to meet the growing needs of your baby as your baby develops.



Normal Infant Feeding Behaviours

Breast milk is easily digested. Your baby may have periods where they feed frequently at night and in the evenings to meet their growing needs. This is known as cluster feeding.

You may feel tempted to supplement with formula, however this can create issues with breastfeeding. Reaching your breastfeeding goals could be affected by nipple confusion and changes in flow rates when supplements are introduced. Supplementing with breastmilk substitutes may decrease your milk supply which can be difficult to reverse.

Growth spurts usually occur at 2-3 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months. At these times, you may notice that your baby is hungrier more often and may want to cluster feed.

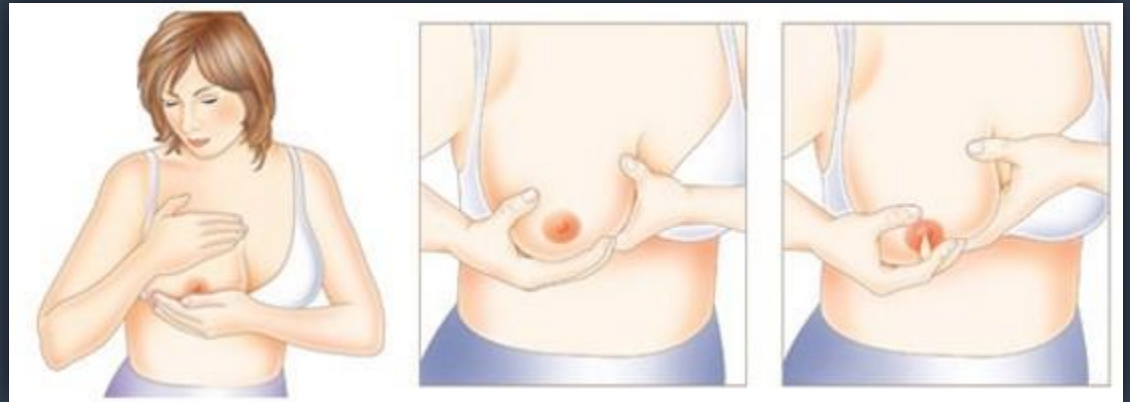


If you are separated from your baby:

Staff will teach you one-on-one how to hand express your breast milk. There is helpful information for you to maximize your supply. If you are planning to use a breast pump there are many different kinds available. Choose one that best suits your needs. Staff will teach you about safely storing and preparing your expressed milk.

Hand Expression

Knowing how to safely remove milk from your breast is a valuable skill to have. It will help stimulate and maintain your milk supply. Staff will help you to learn how.



You may need to express milk to:

- Provide breast milk if your baby is not able to latch effectively or transfer milk.
- Provide breast milk for a preterm or baby that needs extra support.
- Provide breast milk if you are separated.
- Help soften your breast if you experience breast engorgement.

Additional Resources

Alberta Health Services Health Parents Healthy Children: <https://www.healthyparentshealthychildren.ca/>

La Leche League: <http://www.lllc.ca>

Global health media: <http://globalhealthmedia.org/vidios/>

Breastfeeding in the first hours: <https://globalhealthmedia.org/portfolio-items/breastfeeding-in-the-first-hours-after-birth/?portfolioCats=191%2C94%2C13%2C23%2C65>

Positions for breastfeeding: <https://globalhealthmedia.org/portfolio-items/positions-for-breastfeeding/?portfolioCats=191%2C94%2C13%2C23%2C65>

How to express your first milk: <https://globalhealthmedia.org/portfolio-items/how-to-express-your-first-milk/?portfolioCats=191%2C94%2C13%2C23%2C65>

Is your baby getting enough milk? <https://globalhealthmedia.org/portfolio-items/is-your-baby-getting-enough-milk/?portfolioCats=191%2C94%2C13%2C23%2C65>

Attaching your baby at the breast: <https://globalhealthmedia.org/portfolio-items/attaching-your-baby-at-the-breast/?portfolioCats=191%2C94%2C13%2C23%2C65>

Local Public Health Units:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/findhealth/Service.aspx?id=1000963&serviceAtFacilityID=1119414#contentStart>

Circle Medical Breastfeeding Clinic: <https://circlemedical.ca/services/breastfeeding-clinic/>

