

# Breastfeeding: Antenatal checklist

The Royal Women's Hospital Fact Sheet / [www.thewomens.org.au](http://www.thewomens.org.au)



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the royal women's hospital  
victoria australia

**This breastfeeding fact sheet is designed to help you understand some of the breastfeeding topics that will be discussed with you during your pregnancy by your midwife or doctor.**

Your midwife or doctor will also talk to you about your plans to breastfeed and your previous feeding experiences.

If you feel you need to see a Lactation Consultant during your pregnancy please ask your midwife or doctor to arrange this for you.

If you are planning to formula feed your baby from birth, the midwives will discuss with you formula preparation and use in hospital.

## Benefits of breastfeeding for baby

Your breast milk is the perfect food for your baby. It protects your baby against gastroenteritis and diarrhoea, ear and chest infections, allergies and diabetes.

## Benefits of breastfeeding for mothers

Breastfeeding reduces the risk of bleeding after the birth, helps you return to pre-pregnant weight, is convenient and costs nothing. Breastfeeding also reduces your risk of breast and ovarian cancer and osteoporosis.

## Importance of uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact after birth and the first breastfeed after birth

Holding your baby skin to skin helps you to bond closely with your baby. This is linked to better breastfeeding success and longer breastfeeding duration. After your baby is born your baby will start to seek your breast for a breastfeed. We will help you recognise the signs that your baby is ready to feed such as licking, sucking, putting her hand to her mouth, making soft noises. After a caesarean birth, it is possible to have your baby with you in recovery – talk to your midwife about this.

## Getting position and attachment right

Breastfeeding is a learned skill that takes time, patience and practice. In the first few days, your breasts are producing colostrum which is all the nutrition a healthy baby needs. Your breasts will feel soft at this stage before the mature milk 'comes in'. This time allows you and your baby an opportunity to learn and practice good positioning and attachment. This will help avoid nipple pain and ensure your baby receives enough milk.

## Demand feeding

Your baby will usually feed a minimum of 8 times and up to 12 times in 24 hours while breastfeeding is being established – this is very normal and will settle with time.

## Rooming-in (stay close to your baby)

At the Women's we will be supporting you to keep your baby in your room with you all the time. Keeping baby with you helps you to recognise the signs that your baby is ready for a feed or if your baby is tired or needs a cuddle.

## Using teats, dummies and complementary feeds

Your young baby is learning to breastfeed and can become confused if offered a teat or dummy before they have learnt to breastfeed well. Offering fluids other than breast milk will decrease the time your baby breastfeeds, which will reduce your breast milk supply. Frequent, unrestricted suckling at the breast will satisfy your baby.

## Exclusive breastfeeding to six months

Healthy breastfed babies need no other food or drink until around six months of age. You can be confident that your baby is receiving enough breast milk when:

- you see six or more heavy wet nappies and at least one bowel action a day in the early weeks
- your baby is gaining weight
- your baby is bright and alert and usually settles after most feeds.

## For more information and advice

### Your local Maternal & Child Health Nurse

#### Australian Breastfeeding Association

Tel: 1800 686 268 – Breastfeeding Helpline

Web: [www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au)

#### Maternal & Child Health Line (24 hours)

Tel: 13 22 29

### For women in Victoria

#### Breastfeeding Service

Royal Women's Hospital

Tel: (03) 8345 2400

#### Women's Health Information Centre

Royal Women's Hospital

Tel: (03) 8345 3045 or 1800 442 007 (rural callers)

Email: [whic@thewomens.org.au](mailto:whic@thewomens.org.au)

#### Related fact sheet

*Breastfeeding: Getting started*

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