



Babies need their mother's milk

Breast milk is the best nutrition for all babies. Even if a mother has made an informed decision not to breastfeed, her breasts begin making breast milk after birth. This milk is a very precious gift for a sick or premature baby. Therefore, mothers are asked to consider expressing and providing breast milk to their baby even if they were not intending to breastfeed. This is the critical time when a baby needs breast milk the most.

Research shows that babies fed their mother's milk:

- Have fewer infections
- Have better digestion
- Have better vision
- Have stronger bones
- Become smarter kids
- Go home from hospital sooner

Breastfeeding is also important for mothers:

- Breastfeeding hormones can help mothers cope during this stressful time
- Breastfeeding increases the connection to their baby
- Breastfeeding keeps mothers healthier
- Better weight loss
- Less risk of breast cancer and weak bones

When an infant is too young or too sick to breastfeed, mothers need to express their milk by hand and with a breast pump. It is important to:

- Start expressing your milk as soon as possible – within 6 hours of birth
- Hand express and pump frequently (at least 8 times a day) to encourage your breasts to make milk
- Use “hand expression” to collect the small amounts of milk in your breasts
- Use a hospital grade double electric breast pump that pumps both breasts at the same time
- Be sure that your pumping accessory kit fits properly

Nurses and lactation consultants will help mothers learn to hand express, pump and store their breast milk.

Breastfeeding is a gift only a mother can give to her baby!