



## | breastfeeding |

Breastfeeding provides multiple benefits to babies and mothers, and we encourage all new mothers to breastfeed if possible. Learn more about breastfeeding by attending a breastfeeding class (see the “Maternity classes” insert elsewhere in this packet). Carolinas HealthCare System also offers lactation consultants to answer your breastfeeding questions and assist you before and after delivery.

### Breastfeeding recommendation

- Breastfeed exclusively for at least the first six months of life.

### Breastfeeding benefits for baby

- Breast milk provides the perfect mix of vitamins, protein and fat your baby needs to grow and thrive.
- Colostrum in breast milk the first few days after childbirth helps your newborn’s digestive system grow and function.
- Breast milk contains antibodies that strengthen your baby’s immune system, helping fight viruses and bacteria.
- Breast milk is easier to digest than formula.
- Breastfed babies have less risk of:
  - food allergies
  - diarrhea
  - ear infections
  - obesity
  - diabetes
  - leukemia
  - sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
  - long- and short-term health problems for premature babies

### Breastfeeding benefits for mothers

- Oxytocin released during breastfeeding helps the uterus contract and return to normal size more quickly.

- Faster and easier postpartum weight loss.
- Saves time and money.
- Creates a strong bond between mother and baby.
- Delays the return of menstrual periods and may aid in spacing of pregnancies.
- Mothers who breastfeed have lower risk of:
  - osteoporosis
  - breast cancer
  - ovarian cancer
  - postpartum hemorrhage
  - Type 2 diabetes
  - heart disease
  - rheumatoid arthritis

### Importance of rooming in

- Rooming in allows you and your baby to stay together.
- Helps new mothers identify early feeding cues from baby.
- Helps mothers and babies with bonding and attachment.

### Benefits of early skin-to-skin contact

- Maintains baby’s body temperature (keeps baby warm).
- Increases bonding and attachment.
- Reduces crying.
- Increases exclusive breastfeeding.

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Carolinas HealthCare System is committed to meeting the needs of every breastfeeding family. We want to provide the best care based on the latest research. Breastfeeding is the best start for your baby. Following the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding has been shown to provide the best health outcomes for mom and baby.

## Ten steps to successful breastfeeding:

- We have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely shared with all staff.
- We train all staff in the skills needed to carry out this policy.
- We share the benefits of breastfeeding and management with all of our pregnant patients.
- We help mothers start breastfeeding within one hour.
- We show mothers how to support breastfeeding even if they are separated from their babies.
- We do not give babies food or drink other than breast milk unless there is a medical reason.
- We practice rooming-in, allowing mothers and babies to stay together 24 hours a day.
- We encourage baby-led feeding.
- We do not give pacifiers or artificial nipples to breastfeeding babies.
- We refer mothers to breastfeeding support groups.



Carolinas HealthCare System