

My team is **BRHS**



Breastfeeding: Getting Started

BRHS has been a Baby Friendly Accredited Hospital since 1997. Baby Friendly accreditation is part of a joint initiative between the World Health Organization and UNICEF to promote and support breastfeeding throughout the world.

At BRHS, mothers informed choice of feeding is encouraged, respected and supported with breastmilk recognised as the optimal form of nutrition for infants up to at least 6 months of age and beyond.

At BRHS

- Our staff are guided by our current breastfeeding policy
- Our staff are provided with up to date information and education to help you breastfeed
- We provide opportunities during your pregnancy for you to learn about breastfeeding
- We encourage you to hold your baby in skin-to-skin contact and help you to recognize when your baby is ready to feed (baby feeding cues)
- We will help you to breastfeed and show you how to express your milk, even if you are separated from your baby
- Your baby will only be given your breastmilk, unless there is a medical reason for an alternative
- We encourage you and your baby to be together at all times
- We encourage you to breastfeed in response to your baby's feeding cues
- We discourage the use of dummies and teats as they interfere with establishing breastfeeding
- We will help you find local breastfeeding support

Introduction

This booklet has been designed for mothers who are beginning their breastfeeding journey.

In it you will find information on how to get started and how to overcome some of the challenges you may face in the first few days.

We have also included a section on expressing your milk which is an invaluable skill to have.

We encourage you to remember that breastfeeding is a learned skill which takes time, patience and practice. Once breastfeeding is established, most women and babies find it a very rewarding and enjoyable experience.

Please talk to your midwife if you need to get any help or advice.



The beauty of breastmilk

Breastmilk is the best start for your baby...

BENEFITS FOR BABY

Your breastmilk is perfect and uniquely made for your growing baby's needs. Its antibodies help to protect your baby against gastroenteritis, ear and chest infections and, reduces the risk of allergies, eczema and the likelihood of developing diabetes.

BENEFITS FOR MOTHERS

Breastfeeding is good news for mums as well with Mums who breastfeed often finding it easier to lose their pregnancy weight and breastfeeding can help to protect you from ovarian and breast cancer as well as giving you stronger bones later in life.

It's also very convenient and allows you to feed anywhere, anytime.

Your breastmilk is perfect and specially made for your growing baby's needs most babies need no other food or drink until they are at least 6 months of age.

After your baby is born

As soon as your baby is born, they are placed directly onto your chest (known as skin-to-skin contact). Skin-to-skin contact should be uninterrupted for at least an hour as this allows your baby to follow its natural instinct to breastfeed.

It also promotes a feeling of closeness and a strong hormonal response to remind your body to produce plenty of milk for baby as well as being linked to higher rates of breastfeeding success along with longer breastfeeding duration.

Putting baby to the breast

There are many different ways to hold your baby for breastfeeding depending on what is most comfortable for you and your baby.

Whichever way you choose, there are some helpful guidelines to follow to make sure your baby feeds well:

1. Your baby should be held close to you
2. He/she should be facing your breast with head, shoulders and body in a straight line
3. His/her nose should be opposite your nipple
4. He/she should be able to reach your breast easily, without stretching or twisting
5. Remember to always move your baby to your breast, not your breast towards the baby



Cradle Hold



Football Hold



Side-lying Hold

TIPS

- Make sure you're comfortable
- Unwrap baby so they are close to you

REMEMBER

- Nose to nipple
- Tummy to Tummy
- Baby to Breast



Attaching the baby to the breast

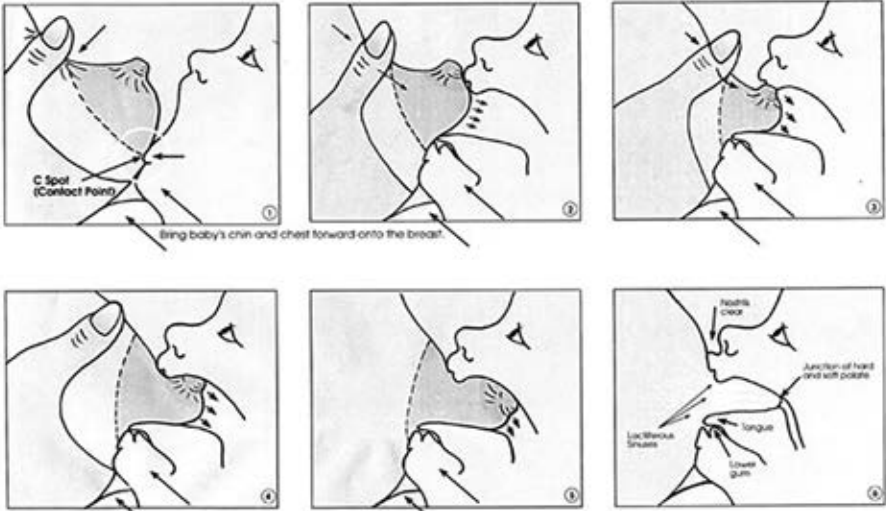
It is really important that your baby attaches properly otherwise they may not get enough milk during the feed and your nipples may become sore. To attach baby properly:

1. Hold your baby's body as close as described on pg. 4 with his nose level with your nipple
2. Let your baby's head tip back slightly so that his top lip brushes against your nipple. This should encourage your baby to open his mouth really wide
3. Quickly move him to your breast, so that his bottom lip is as far away as possible from the nipple to enable a large mouth full of breast

Signs that your baby is attached to your breast and feeding well

- Your baby has a large mouth full of breast and his mouth is wide open
- His chin is touching your breast
- It doesn't hurt you when your baby is feeding (there maybe some discomfort when the baby first attaches)
- If any of the areola is visible ,you can see more above your baby's top lip than below his bottom lip
- His sucking patterns change from short sucks to long deep sucking and swallowing with pauses
- Your baby finishes the feed and comes off the breast on his own

Attachment - The Key to Successful Breastfeeding



Patterns of feeding

The length of time a baby feeds at the breast varies enormously. Feeds may be quite long or frequent as your baby learns. It is also very normal behaviour for baby's to cluster feed (many smaller feeds).

If you feed your baby whenever he or she is hungry you will make plenty of milk to meet your baby's needs. This is because every time your baby is sucking at the breast a message is sent to the brain which in turn sends signals to your breast to make more milk.

Most babies take both breasts, and finish the feed by either falling asleep or taking themselves off the breast.

REMEMBER: The more baby feeds, the more milk is made

First milk

The first milk is produced in small amounts and is called colostrum. Colostrum is thick and yellowish in colour as well as being high in nutrient. It is very important as it nourishes and protects your baby from disease. Your milk will gradually increase in volume and become thinner and more watery looking as your milk supply comes in. This is completely normal, remember your milk contains everything your baby needs to grow and to satisfy hunger.

TIP: Whenever baby is hungry put him/her to the breast.

Feeding cues

Babies should be able to feed as often and for as long as they need too. There should be no limit on the number of times you feed your baby. A well newborn will feed at least 8-12 times including nighttime feeds in a 24-hour period.

Be aware of the early signs of hunger; don't wait until your baby is crying.

At a glance **F**eeding **c**ues

Early cues *These mean, "I'm hungry"*



Stirring



Mouth opening



Turning head seeking/rooting

Mid cues *These mean, "I'm really hungry"*



Stretching



Increasing physical movement



Hand to mouth

Late cues *These mean, "I'm really upset! You need to calm me first, then feed me"*



Crying



Agitated body movements



Colour turning red

Calmbaby: *Try cuddling, skin-to-skin contact on chest, talking and stroking*

Signs that baby is getting enough milk

- In the first couple of days you may see only 2 or 3 wet nappies increasing in the early weeks once your milk comes in to 6 or more heavy wet nappies and at least one loose yellow bowel action every day. This is after initial meconium (first bowel action) is passed
- Your baby is gaining weight
- Your baby is bright, alert and usually content
- Is satisfied after most feeds and will come off the breast on their own
- If you have any concerns speak to your Midwife, Doctor or Maternal Child Health Nurse in the early weeks

Rooming in

If you and your baby are healthy, you should remain together with your baby 24 hours a day whilst establishing breastfeeding. This allows unrestricted feeding and helps you to learn your baby's "feeding cues" and different behaviours.

Successful breastfeeding tips

- The more milk you give your baby, the more milk is made. Giving other food or drink may reduce your milk supply
- Frequent unrestricted sucking at the breast will satisfy your baby.
- Remember feeding your baby whenever he/she wants is the key to building a good milk supply and preventing many problems
- More feeding = more signals = more milk
- If you give baby less milk they do not have the same protection against illness
- Avoid the use of dummies and teats as it can interfere with feeding and may not allow breasts to make enough milk for your baby's needs

Common challenges

Sore nipples, engorgement and mastitis generally occur as the baby is not attached to the breast ideally or because your baby is not being put to the breast often enough.

How your milk supply increases

As baby grows he will have hungry days and will demand more feeds. If you feed more frequently for a day or two your breastmilk will increase and match your baby's needs. Rest and have a quiet few days at home are helpful if possible. Eat well and drink to thirst.

REMEMBER: your breasts are never empty.

Please ask for help if you are unsure or in need of further help.



Expressing your milk

There are a number of reasons why you may want to express your milk including:

- If your breasts are full and uncomfortable
- To soften the breast to help your baby to attach
- To give your baby expresses milk if they are small or sick
- If you are going back to work or
- If you need to be away from your baby for a period of time (e.g. a special event)

How to express your milk

- By hand
- By using a hand pump or
- An electric pump

TIP: Wash your hands thoroughly and make sure all your equipment, containers, pump pieces are washed in hot soapy water and rinsed clean in hot water before you use them.

To stimulate your milk to flow

- Make yourself comfortable, so you are as relaxed as possible
- Have your baby close, or a photo if this is not possible
- Use warm compresses or have a warm shower
- Gently massage your breast to stimulate the let down of milk by rolling your nipple between your finger and thumb and gently stroking your breast towards your nipple

How to express by hand



- Place your thumb and forefinger on opposite sides of the nipple at about the border of the areola
- Press the finger and thumb together towards the chest without sliding the fingers on the skin and gently compress
- Release the pressure and then repeat, creating a similar rhythm to a sucking baby
- At first you may only get a few drops, but keep going with practice and time milk will flow more easily
- Hand pumps are available in various designs, and work in slightly different ways. Some are operated by hand and some by battery. However they all have a funnel which fits over the nipple and areola. If possible try before you buy so you get the pump that suits you the best



Electric pumps



- Electric pumps work automatically and are really good if you need to express for a prolonged period of time such as if you have a pre-term or sick baby
- You need to express as often as you expect to feed your baby. A minimum of 8 times in 24 hours, if you are not feeding your baby or between feeds if you need to increase your supply

Storing breastmilk

Cool freshly expressed breastmilk before adding to previously expressed chilled or frozen milk:

- Frozen milk must be warmed quickly but NOT in boiling water
- DO NOT leave expressed milk to stand at room temperature to thaw
- Place container under running cold water, slowly make the water warmer until the milk becomes liquid
- Then warm the container of chilled or thawed milk in a jug of hot water until it is body temperature
- Microwave ovens should NEVER be used thaw or heat milk

Guidelines for storage of breastmilk at home

| Breastmilk Status | Room Temperature (26 degrees or lower) | Refrigerator (4 degrees or lower) | Freezer |
|--|--|---|---|
| Freshly expressed into container | 6-8 hours. If refrigerator is available store milk there. | 3-5 days. Store at the back where it is coldest. | 2 weeks in freezer compartment inside refrigerator. 3 months in freezer section of refrigerator with separate door. 6-12 months in deep freeze (-18 degrees) |
| Previously frozen, thawed in refrigerator but not warmed | 4 hours or less - that is, the next feeding | 24 hours | Do not refreeze |
| Thawed outside refrigerator in warm water | For completion of feeding | 4 hours or until next feeding | Do not refreeze |
| Infant has begun feeding | Only for completion of feeding | Discard | Discard |

Support

BRHS Midwives Team and Ward

Once you return home with your baby a midwife will contact you and arrange a home visit and maintain contact for up to 2 weeks post birth, this is flexible depending on individual needs. All Midwives have extensive training with breastfeeding and can recognise issues where you may need a referral to a lactation consultant.

Contact Details:

Maternity Ward Midwives - Ph: 5150 3455

Maternal and Child Health Services

Is a free service to support your child's health and development from birth until school age. A Maternal Child Health Nurse (MCHN) may visit you in hospital and will contact you to arrange a home visit within the first week of your discharge from hospital. All MCHN are very experienced with breastfeeding and some are also Lactation Consultants.

Bairnsdale - 281 Main Street

Monday to Friday by appointment.

Bruthen - Main Street Community Health Centre

Tuesday by appointment.

Lakes Entrance - 18-28 Jemmerson Street

Monday and Thursday by appointment.

Contact Details:

Phone **5155 8300** select option 2 to request location of appointment.


- Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) Breastfeeding help line (24 hours, 7 days a week)
1800 6862 686 (1800 mumtomum)
- Visit **www.breastfeeding.asn.au** and/or contact you local ABA Bairnsdale Far Eastern Group. **Email ababairnsdaleorbost@gmail.com**
- Your GPO / Doctor
McLeod Street Medical Centre - **5152 5145**
Bairnsdale Medical Group - **5152 4123**
- Agnes Parent and Infant Unit Latrobe Regional Hospital
5173 8553 or **unit-agnes@lrh.com.au**
- Royal Women's Hospital information sheets -
www.thewomens.org.au

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Breastfeeding Your Baby: The Royal Women's Hospital 2017
- Breastfeeding and Breast Care: Government of Western Australia Department of Health 2014
- Off to the Best Start: UK department of health 2010.
- Expressed Breastmilk Government of South Australia, SA Health August 2012
- Video 'Birthing Sense', Birthing Education video series
- Baby Feeding Cues QLD Government QLD Health Nov 2017
- The Key to Successful Breastfeeding by Rebecca Glover 2012



BRHS supports, promotes and protects breastfeeding as the optimal way for women to feed her baby.



***Improving the health and
wellbeing of the East Gippsland
community by providing
accessible, high quality and
sustainable health***

We welcome feedback at:

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The information in this brochure is intended as a guide to one of the services provided by BRHS and is correct at the time of publishing. Issue date: February 2024

Bairnsdale Regional Health Service is located on the traditional land of the Gunaikurnai people.