

# Breastfeeding Advice

## for Expectant Mothers

As you prepare for your new baby, you have many decisions to make about how to care for them. One of those decisions is about how you will feed your baby. Breastfeeding offers many health benefits to both you, and your child. **Worldwide, all health organizations support this; talk to your doctor about your decision to breastfeed!** Making the choice to breastfeed can protect both you and your baby from many illnesses, diseases, and even death. Breast milk will boost your child's immune system, protecting them from ear infections, eczema, diarrhea and vomiting, asthma, diabetes, types of cancer, and many other illnesses. Plus, breastfeeding will strengthen your baby's relationship with you, and make them smarter! Breastfeeding will also help you heal more quickly after giving birth, as well as reduce your risk of breast and ovarian cancers, diabetes, postpartum depression and other illnesses. For baby and mom, breast really is best! Here are some tips for you, as you prepare to begin breastfeeding:

### Preparing to Breastfeed:

- **Breastfeeding is the best way to nourish your child.**
- After you've made your decision to breastfeed, be sure to include it in your birthing plan. Make sure you tell your doctors and nurses that you wish to breastfeed.
- Tell your doctors and nurses not to give your baby artificial nipples, such as bottles or pacifiers.
- For some mothers, breastfeeding may be uncomfortable or painful at first. After the first few days, your breasts should be less tender and sore. If you experience discomfort, ask your lactation consultant for help with latching on.
- Nursing takes practice! Keep at it, and it will become easier.
- Talk to your family and friends about your decision to breastfeed. Try to find people who will support you and help you—before the baby comes.
- Try to find a lactation consultant before your baby comes!
- If you have your choice of where to give birth, consider choosing a hospital with adequate lactation supports.

### Breastfeeding Must Haves:

- Make sure you pack comfortable clothes for your recovery time at the hospital.
- There are laws that protect your right to breastfeed your baby—even when you are in the hospital! To learn more about what your rights are, read the New York State Department of Health's Breastfeeding Mothers' Bill of Rights.
- If your provider offers birthing classes, take advantage! Find out if your insurance will cover the expense.

### Getting Started:

- Plan to breastfeed your baby as soon as possible after they are born
- Plan to observe the Golden Hour:
  - have your naked baby placed on your bare chest or abdomen—skin-to-skin—as soon as possible after birth; stay this way with your baby until after his or her first feeding
  - ask that the baby's physical assessment be done while the baby is skin-to-skin with you
  - have your providers wait to weigh, measure, bathe, or run tests on the baby until after the first feeding
  - Know that you can ask for the help of a lactation consultant
  - if your baby is taken to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), you can begin pumping as soon as possible
- Remember: your first milk, called colostrum, is rich in important vitamins and nutrients that your baby needs.

