



Information for
patients and
carers

**Feeding and building a
relationship with your baby**

The foundations of good parenting begin during pregnancy and continue as your baby grows. Even in early pregnancy many women instinctively start to form a relationship with their baby by talking to them and sometimes naming them. Feeling your baby kick for the first time can be very exciting for you and your partner.

As your pregnancy progresses, take time to make further connections with your baby, perhaps by stroking your bump in response to movements or playing your favourite music and noticing how your baby behaves. These are only suggestions, every mother and baby pair is unique and you will connect with your baby in whatever way feels right for you. Some parents are worried that they are not developing a positive baby/parent relationship at this stage of pregnancy. If you have any concerns please discuss this with your midwife for extra support.

Part of this developing relationship is likely to include making plans for after the birth when feeding will become an important part of your interaction with your baby. Every mother-to-be has different needs, hopes and experiences, so during the course of your pregnancy your midwife will help you explore these, answering any questions you may have to help you understand how to establish responsive and effective feeding as smoothly as possible.

Giving your baby the best start in life

You will be helped and encouraged to hold your baby in skin to skin contact as soon as possible after the birth. Skin to skin contact calms your baby, regulates their heart rate and breathing and gives you both a chance to rest, keep warm and get to know each other. During this time your baby will show signs of wanting to feed, perhaps licking your breast or sucking their fingers. It is only now that you may decide how you want to feed your baby. Once you have offered that first feed it is still good to continue to hold your baby in skin contact and perhaps, your partner may like to be involved in providing this valuable contact.

What is the optimal way to feed my baby?

LTHTR believes that breastfeeding is the healthiest way for babies to be fed, and recognises the important health benefits now known to exist for the mother, her child, the environment and the wider community. It is clear that more breastfeeding means less disease, less antibiotics, less GP consultations, less hospital admissions, and consequently less emotional anxiety for you as parents.

What are the advantages of breastfeeding?

For baby:

Breast milk protects your baby against many serious illnesses; these include diarrhoea and vomiting, chest, ear and urine infections, eczema and wheezing.

Research has shown that children who have been breastfed have higher IQ scores and achieve more at school than babies who have had formula milk.

Babies who are breastfed are less likely to become overweight in later life and are less likely to suffer from high blood pressure.

Breastfeeding also reduces the risk of Type 1 Diabetes and childhood leukaemia.

For you:

Breastfeeding will help you to lose weight by 'burning up' fat stores laid down during pregnancy.

Breastfeeding also reduces your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes in later life.

Breastfeeding may offer you some protection against developing ovarian cancer, breast cancer and hip fractures.

Many women find breastfeeding a rewarding and satisfying experience.

Special situations

If you have diabetes during pregnancy or your baby has a cleft lip or palate we will encourage you to express your milk from 37 weeks of pregnancy. You can find more information in the leaflet Antenatal Expressing.

Some mothers worry about the effects of prescribed medication, breast reduction or breast implants on breastfeeding. Discuss any concerns you have with your midwife.

What if I do not want to breastfeed?

We acknowledge that there are some mothers who are unable to exclusively breastfeed or choose not to. If you want or have to bottle feed your baby, you can consider giving expressed breast milk feeds. You can talk to your midwife about expressing your breast milk and giving it to your baby as an alternative to artificial milk.

If you choose to give your baby formula milk, we will support you with making up of feeds safely and how to feed responsively to optimise relationship building between baby and parents; whether you choose breastmilk feeds or formula milk your baby will benefit from paced feeding, being held close and looking into their eyes during feeds and being fed by you and your partner rather than lots of different people.

If you are bottle feeding, this can still be done in skin to skin contact by you following the birth.

Help and support in hospital and at home

New parents can feel overwhelmed with the arrival of a new baby and breastfeeding can be challenging in our busy modern world so it is good to know you are not alone. Our infant feeding specialist, midwives, health care assistants and the families and babies team (FAB) are

available to help both in hospital and at home. Information regarding postnatal care will be provided on discharge from hospital. You can also access further support via phones or online by looking at our Feeding Your Baby section on LTHTR Website.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:
Specialist Infant Feeding Midwife on **01772 524512**.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

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Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

Cantonese:

如果你希望以另外一種格式接收該資訊，請和我們聯絡，不必猶豫。

Gujarati:

જો તમને આ માહિતી બીજી રચના કે ફોર્મેટમાં મેળવવાની ઈચ્છા હોય, તો કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક કરતા અચકાશો નહિ.

Hungarian:

Kérjük, vegye fel velünk a kapcsolatot, ha más formában kéri ezt az információt.

Polish:

Jeżeli chciał(a)by Pan/Pani otrzymać niniejsze informacje w innym formacie, prosimy o kontakt.

Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਾ ਝਿਜਕੋ।

Urdu:

اگر آپ اس معلومات کو کسی اور صورت میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کرنے میں ہچکچاہٹ محسوس نہ کریں۔

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Division: Women and Children's

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