

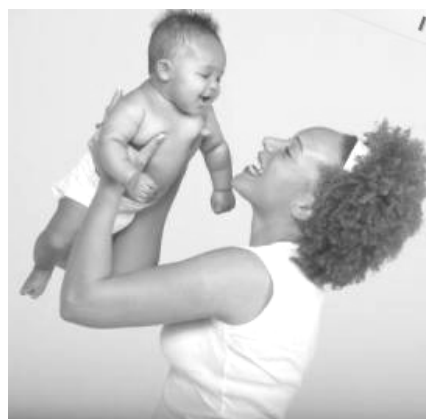


Breastfeeding for Healthy Baby

Congratulations! You are a new mother. You want to do what is best for your baby and have probably heard that breastfeeding gives your baby tremendous health and emotional benefits. Well, you heard right! By choosing to breastfeed your baby, you are giving the gift of a perfect food and the best start in life!

While breastfeeding can bring you great joy and satisfaction, you may experience challenges from time to time. Most new mothers need some guidance and support. Your greatest sources of information and encouragement will come from your peer counselor, lactation consultant, physician, and family and friends who have nursed

their own children. If you have any troubles or worries, talk with them. Their wisdom, experience, and support could make all the difference! Don't forget that special person on your life whether it is your spouse or significant other who can give much needed emotional and physical support to you and your baby.



Successful breastfeeding begins with gathering information during your pregnancy. Start by educating yourself. Read books, talk with friends and family who have breastfed, attend breastfeeding classes, and seek out lactation support groups. The more you know and the more comfortable you are, the more successful you will most likely be.

Breastfeeding even for a short period of time is a unique, once in a lifetime gift from a mother to her child. If you're undecided about breastfeeding, at least give it a try. You may surprise yourself! And, if you can breastfeed longer that's even better.

How to start breastfeeding

It's important to get your baby hooked on the breast as early as possible. Get your baby used to breastfeeding as quickly as you can after he or she is born. Here are five things you can do in the hospital:

1. Put baby to you breast right after birth. Newborns are born with a suckling instinct that's strongest in the first hour of life. Taking advantage of this will make breastfeeding easier going forward.



2. Try nursing approximately every two hours, or whenever your baby cries. This will start your milk production and give both you and baby practice at latching on. Also, baby will get colostrum, a pre-milk liquid that's rich in immunity-boosting antibodies.

3. Enlist the help of a nurse or lactation consultant to "spot" you each time you feed. Once you leave the hospital you may not have so many experts at hand! Don't hesitate to ring the nurse-call button frequently to get assistance.

4. Don't accept formula if you want to breastfeed exclusively. While some moms like to stash it away "for emergencies," it's important to never supplement with formula

in the early days while you're trying to build a strong milk supply. Breast milk production works on a supply and demand basis, and if baby is drinking formula, your body might not make enough milk. Just the sight of formula can undermine your confidence!

5. Go home with the phone number of someone you can call for help. You may feel you've mastered nursing in the hospital, then feel unsure of yourself once you're home. Ask if there's a nurse, lactation consultant, midwife, peer counselor, or hotline you can call with questions. It also doesn't hurt to make a list of friends who have nursed successfully you can call them for tips, or ask one of them to come over help if needed.

Special thanks to Lisa Bobo, Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, for her help with this article!

The Berrien County Health Department has five locations to serve you:

Benton Harbor		Niles		Three Oaks
769 Pipestone	M-139 Office	School Based	1205 N. Front St.	21 N. Elm
P.O. Box 706	2106 S. M-139	870 Colfax Ave	684-2800	756-2008
926-7121	927-5623	925-4500		

Or visit us on the web at www.berriencohlthdept.org

Berrien County Health

Department:
Preventing Disease,
Prolonging Life and
Protecting the
Health of the
Community.



Healthy Beginnings

January is Healthy Beginnings month. This month, the health department will bring you information about topics to begin the new year healthy, including WIC, Interconception Care, Breast Feeding, and Family Planning. For questions about any of these topics, please call the health department at **926-7121**.

Benefits of breastfeeding for baby (and mom, too!)

- Breast milk has just the right amount of fat, sugar, water, and protein that is needed for a baby's growth and development, and most babies find it easier to digest than formula.
- Breastfed infants tend to gain less unnecessary weight and be leaner.
- Premature babies do better when breastfed compared to premature babies who are fed formula.
- Nursing uses up extra calories, making it easier to lose the pounds of pregnancy. It also helps the uterus to get back to its original size and lessens bleeding after giving birth.
- Breastfeeding lowers the risk of breast and ovarian cancers.
- Breastfeeding saves time and money. You do not have to purchase, measure, and mix formula.
- Breastfeeding requires a mother to take some quiet relaxed time for herself and her baby.
- Physical contact is important to newborns and can help them feel more secure, and comforted.
- Breastfeeding mothers may have in-



The Health Department has a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor who can provide support to breastfeeding mothers. Call Lisa Bobo at **927-5222** for more information.

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