

What you can expect during your hospital stay

This is intended for all babies unless your baby needs special attention after birth for their health.

Breastfeeding Promotion

We encourage you to breastfeed your baby and want to help you learn more about it. Please consider taking a breastfeeding class prior to delivery. Breastfeeding is a wonderful opportunity for you and your baby and preparing yourself will help start you off in the right direction. We want you to be successful and will make every effort to help. If you have any questions please contact our lactation office.

Breastfeeding decreases your BABY'S risk of:

- Ear infections, colds, and diarrhea
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Asthma
- Childhood Leukemia

Breastfeeding decreases YOUR risk of:

- Breast cancer
- Ovarian Cancer
- Type II Diabetes

Skin-to-Skin

After delivery, you and your baby will be placed in direct skin-to-skin contact and covered with warm blankets. You will be encouraged to continue holding your baby skin-to-skin until the first breastfeeding is completed. Skin-to-skin will be encouraged throughout the hospital stay. This may be done as much as desired by both mother and/or family member/partner regardless of feeding choice.

Skin-to-skin will help your baby in many ways. Some of them include: increase success with breastfeeding, stabilization of vital signs (heart rate, breathing rate, temperatures, and oxygen levels), stabilization of blood sugar, decrease pain, improves brain development, relaxes your baby, and promotes bonding.

The First Breastfeeding

You can expect the first breastfeeding to occur as soon as possible after the baby is born, within the first hour after delivery, unless medically unstable. Staff will be available to help with this first feeding.

You and your baby are most ready and willing to learn how to breastfeed during the first hours of life.

Rooming-in

You and your baby are encouraged to remain together throughout your hospital stay including at night regardless of your feeding choice. You may hear this being called rooming-in.

Keeping your baby with you helps him/her breastfeed better while you learn your baby's feeding cues. It will promote bonding with your baby and increase your confidence in caring for him/her. Babies who stay near their mothers sleep better, cry less, and mothers get the same amount of sleep whether their babies are in their room or the nursery.

There may be times when your baby has to leave the room for routine procedures. Your baby will be returned as soon as possible. You may be allowed to go with your baby at these times.

Baby feeding and sleeping patterns-First 24 hours of life

During the first few hours of life your baby will be very alert and ready to breastfeed. After this he/she will become very sleepy and less interested in breastfeeding. This is a normal way for your baby to recover from the delivery. We encourage you to place your baby skin-to-skin and try feeding at least every 2-3 hours around the clock.

Baby feeding and sleeping patterns-After 24 hours of life

After this sleepy period, your baby will begin to wake up and nurse more frequently. We encourage you to feed your baby at the first signs of hunger cues, offering both breasts at each feeding. At some feedings your baby will be more sleepy and feed for shorter times. At other feedings your baby may be more awake and feed for longer. We encourage you to follow the signs that your baby gives you, you will not need to time or schedule your breastfeeding sessions. This is called feeding on demand.

You may hear the term cluster feeding. This is a normal instinctive feeding pattern that often occurs at night time. During this time your baby may want to breastfeed often. This may last for several hours, and is usually followed by a period of rest. You may feel tired during this time but your baby is helping you by preventing engorgement.

It is normal for your baby to lose weight during your hospital stay. Your baby will be weighed at birth and daily until discharge. Your baby's doctor will monitor this closely until your baby returns to birth weight.

Risks of elective supplementation

We encourage you to exclusively breastfeed your baby. Exclusive breastfeeding in the hospital helps to establish a full milk supply. There may be medical reasons when supplementing is indicated. During these times we will explain other feeding options and how they can work for you to reach your breastfeeding goal.

Formula supplementation that is not medically needed may change your baby's hunger drive, altering your milk supply. This may lead to a decrease in your milk supply and may cause difficulty breastfeeding. Formula may pose risks to the baby such as: changing the natural stomach lining, increased risk of allergies, fussiness at breast, increased spitting-up, and the process of learning to breastfeed may be disrupted due to the change in suckle.

We will support the feeding decision of every mother.

Limiting visitors to promote parental bonding during hospital stay

We recognize and support that your family and friends want to come to meet your new baby. During your hospital stay we encourage you to allow private time for your new family to bond. Consider limiting visiting hours to allow you and your baby time to get to know each other. This will allow your baby time to learn to breastfeed and allow yourself time to rest.

Breastfeeding concerns

If you have any breastfeeding questions or concerns during your hospital stay there are trained staff to help. Lactation Consultants available 7 days a week during the daytime hours. If one is not available, there are trained staff to help you with breastfeeding.



St. Elizabeth



The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for about 6 months with continuation of breastfeeding for 1 year or longer as mutually desired by a mother and infant.