

Why Breastfeed?



At Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford, we strongly endorse breastfeeding as the optimal method of nutrition for newborns. However, there are circumstances under which breastfeeding may not be successfully initiated or maintained. Together, you and your physician can give careful consideration to all the issues and your family's unique needs to make the final decision whether breastfeeding is best for you and your baby. Our highly trained doctors, nurses and board-certified lactation consultants help support you in breastfeeding exclusively until you and your baby are ready to leave the hospital, establishing a strong foundation for the weeks and months to come. Placing your baby skin-to-skin on your chest during the first hours and days after birth has been shown to support your baby's transition to life outside of the womb. Sharing skin-to-skin time also helps establish successful breastfeeding and bonding.

Breastfeeding Reduces Your Baby's Risk for

- Lung, urinary tract, ear, blood, and diarrheal infections
- Serious infection around the brain (meningitis)
- Diabetes (types 1 and 2)
- Asthma
- Allergies
- Ongoing skin conditions
- Some cancers (leukemia, Hodgkin's disease, lymphoma)
- Overweight and obesity
- High cholesterol
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- Costly dental and orthodontic work
- Infections and poor developmental outcomes in preemies

Benefits for Breastfeeding Mothers

- Less bleeding after your birth
- Helps womb return to pre-pregnant size
- Faster return to pre-pregnancy weight
- Lower risk for both breast and ovarian cancers
- Delayed return of periods after your birth
- No need to pay for formula
- The ability to provide for your infant's nutrition in emergency situations
- Fewer missed days/hours of work due to having a sick infant
- Protection from hip fractures and osteoporosis in postmenopausal women
- Making breast milk creates no waste from manufacturing or packaging