When it comes to breastfeeding, even though there are things that come naturally, both you and your newborn need to learn how to successfully breastfeed. Do not be afraid to reach out. Engage a lactation consultant to get the help you need. Now more than ever before, there are resources available to you to make this a wonderful experience.

This book is designed to answer some basic questions you may have. You will also have instructions from your healthcare provider on specifics for your newborn. Enjoy this time—your baby will develop and grow right before your eyes.

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This publication is designed to provide helpful information on the subjects discussed. The information provided by Customized Communications is not intended to replace the professional medical advice from your healthcare provider. Use this book as a resource only.

For diagnosis, treatment and individual care contact your health professional.

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Please Note:
All words highlighted in BLUE are clearly defined in the glossary.

The information in this booklet is for general reference purposes only and cannot be relied upon as a substitute for medical care. You and your baby should have regular check-ups, as well as consult with your healthcare provider about any special health questions or concerns. Every person is unique and may require a special treatment program.
Getting Started

Choosing to breastfeed in order to give your baby a great nutritional start can be a little overwhelming. Yes, breastfeeding is natural, but it is also a learned skill. An important step that you can take in assuring your success with breastfeeding is to learn the facts and to understand the principles before the birth of your baby. Motivation, knowledge, and practice are keys to helping you meet your breastfeeding goals. You can also find support and information from different types of health professionals, organizations, classes, or support groups.

Attending classes or groups will allow you to:
• Share concerns
• Gain self-confidence
• Build a support system
• Work through issues
• Learn tips
• Receive encouragement

Health professionals who can help with breastfeeding

International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC) are professionals with knowledge and skills to support breastfeeding. IBCLCs have specific education and clinical experience in breastfeeding and must pass an exam to become certified. They can help with comprehensive breastfeeding issues and answer complex questions. Certified Lactation Counselors (CLC) and Certified Breastfeeding Educators (CBE) have special training and experience in helping breastfeeding mothers and babies. They can help with basic breastfeeding challenges and questions.

Steps to Breastfeeding

Have your baby placed skin-to-skin on your chest immediately after giving birth.
• Breastfeed as soon as your baby is ready.
• Let your baby stay in the room with you at all times so that you can breastfeed often.
• Avoid pacifiers until your milk is in and your baby is latching well to your breast.
• Ask staff not to give a pacifier, sugar water, or formula unless there is a medical need.
• Have confidence in yourself and your commitment to breastfeed.
• Seek help from a lactation consultant if needed.

These steps can help you start a great breastfeeding relationship. Each step is explained in-depth on the following pages.

Benefits of Breastfeeding

There are many benefits of breastfeeding, especially exclusive breastfeeding. For however long you choose to nurse, your baby’s immune system benefits greatly from breast milk. The following are just a few benefits of breastfeeding for you and your baby:

For Baby:
• Easily digested.
• Has all the nutrients needed.
• Has protective effects against SIDS.
• Protects against gastrointestinal disturbances, allergies, ear, and lower respiratory infections.
• May reduce the risk of certain chronic diseases and infections like diabetes and hypertension.
• Protects the gut from germs and diseases.
• Changes to meet your growing baby’s needs.

For You:
• Convenient and cost-effective.
• Helps the uterus return to its normal size faster.
• Promotes postpartum weight loss.
• Less likely to develop breast, uterine, endometrial, and ovarian cancer.
• May reduce the risk of heart disease.
• Decreases insulin use in moms with diabetes.
• Lowers risk of osteoporosis later in life.
• Decreases risk of postpartum bleeding.

Exclusive Breastfeeding

Breast milk contains all the nutrients an infant needs in their first six months of life. Breastfeeding exclusively during that time will help them achieve optimal growth, development, and health. Exclusive breastfeeding means that the infant receives only breast milk. No other liquids or solids are given – not even water. The only exceptions are oral rehydration solutions, or drops/syrups of vitamins, minerals, or medicines.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends:
• Exclusive breastfeeding for about the first 6 months of life.
• After 6 months and until the infant is 1 year old continue breastfeeding while gradually introducing solid foods.
• After 1 year continue breastfeeding as long as mutually desired by mother and infant.

Tips to help:
• Room-in with your baby in the hospital and room-share at home.
• Put your baby skin-to-skin as much as possible.
• Let your baby breastfeed often by responding early to your baby’s feeding cues.
• Prolactin levels are highest at night, stimulating milk production, so take advantage of those feedings.
• Avoid formula, unless there is a medical reason, it can interfere with breastfeeding and your milk production.
• After feedings, hand express and give any extra milk to your baby.
• Find support through friends, support groups, or play groups.
• Contact a lactation consultant if you are having problems breastfeeding.
• Avoid pacifiers until your baby is latching on well, usually 3 to 4 weeks.

The World Health Organization (WHO) also recommends exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months. After 6 months a baby should receive foods with breast milk until age 2 or older.