

Breastfed babies and formula milk

i Information for patients
Maternity Services



PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



Breastfed babies and formula milk

Your breast milk is unique for your baby and breastfeeding provides not only food, but also protection and love.

Your colostrum (the breast milk you produce in the first few days) and then continued exclusive breast feeding is all the food your baby needs for the first 6 months.

Exclusive breastfeeding gives your baby protection against urine infections, ear infections and gastroenteritis (tummy bugs). Formula milk may increase your baby's risk of developing diabetes, asthma, eczema or allergies.

What happens if my baby can't or won't breastfeed?

You will be shown how to express your breast milk so that:

- your breasts will not become engorged and they will continue to produce enough milk.
- your baby can receive your colostrum / breast milk instead of formula milk.

You will be encouraged to hold your baby in skin to skin contact which will:

- calm your baby
- stimulate your milk supply
- encourage your baby to feed

What if there is a medical reason for my baby to have formula milk?

Some breastfed babies may also need formula milk. However, the more breastfeeding / breast milk your baby receives, the more protection your baby receives, and you will continue to produce enough milk for your baby.

You will be shown how to express your milk so that:

- your breasts will not become engorged and they will continue to produce enough breast milk.
- your baby can receive your colostrum / breast milk as well as formula milk.

You will be:

- shown how to give expressed milk / formula by cup (sucking on a bottle teat may make it more difficult for your baby to attach at the breast correctly).
- supported to return to exclusive breastfeeding if this is what you wish.

Remember - holding your baby in skin to skin contact will calm your baby, stimulate your milk supply and encourage your baby to feed.

What if I choose to breastfeed and give formula (combination / mixed feeding)?

It is important to breastfeed and/or express as much as possible in the early weeks to establish your milk supply before introducing formula feeds (otherwise your milk supply will dry up). Remember the more you breastfeed, the more milk you produce and the more protection you give your baby. Talk to your midwife or health visitor for more information about how to successfully combination / mixed feed.

Further information

For unbiased, up to date information about formula milks go to www.firststepsnutrition.org

For more information on the value of exclusive breastfeeding, expressing breast milk and formula feeding speak to your midwife, health visitor or infant feeding supporter. This information (and more) can also be found in your 'Mothers and Others Guide'.



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