LATCHING ON TO Breastfeeding
A Guide to Giving Your Baby a Healthy Start
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction ............................................................................................................... 2
- Breastfeeding 101 ..................................................................................................... 3
- Baby Friendly Initiative ............................................................................................. 4
- Breastfeeding: What to Do Before You Are Due ................................................... 5
- Non-pharmacologic Pain Relief .............................................................................. 5
- Breastfeeding: What to Do When Your Baby is New ............................................. 6
- Exclusive Breastfeeding ........................................................................................... 9
- Benefits of Rooming In ............................................................................................ 9
- Breastfeeding: A Learning Experience for You and Your Baby ............................. 9
- Breastfeeding Positions .......................................................................................... 10
- Latching Baby On ..................................................................................................... 11
- What Successful Breastfeeding Looks Like ............................................................ 12
- Don’t Forget… Important Tips for the New Mom ..................................................... 12
- How Do I Know My Baby is Getting Enough Milk ............................................... 13
- How May My Husband Help? .................................................................................. 13
- Breastfeeding Resources ......................................................................................... 14

---

“Breastfeeding is nature’s health plan.”

–Author Unknown
INTRODUCTION

Although many women choose to breastfeed because they realize it is what is best for their baby, they also quickly realize what a wonderful time it is for learning about, and bonding with, their infant. Breastfeeding is a learning experience for both you and your baby and is not accomplished overnight. It requires time, practice, patience and support. Once successful, however, nursing is one of the most gratifying and natural acts a woman will experience in her lifetime.

In recent years, there has been an increase in available information regarding the benefits of breastfeeding and more and more women are choosing to breastfeed exclusively. It is important that they are provided with education, resources and tools to help provide a solid foundation for breastfeeding. This booklet is intended to educate the expectant mother about the benefits of breastfeeding, describe common breastfeeding problems, and offer some solutions to those issues if they occur. It also gives you an inside look at what to expect when you arrive at a WellStar hospital to have your baby, and the procedures we have in place to help facilitate breastfeeding. Breastfeeding creates a special connection between mother and child and our hope is to facilitate that bonding for every family we serve.

Although any amount of breastfeeding is beneficial to your baby, the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months have been widely researched and proven. Following the first six months of exclusive breastfeeding, speak with your doctor about adding solid foods to your baby’s diet. After adding solid foods, your infant may safely breastfeed for up to two years and beyond.
BREASTFEEDING 101: WHY IS BREASTFEEDING IMPORTANT?

Breastfeeding is more than just a way to feed your baby. It contains the best balance of the nutrients necessary for the healthy growth and development of infants and young children. Breastfeeding benefits everyone involved: you, your baby, your family and the community.

Health Benefits for Baby

- Breastfeeding provides your baby with needed nutrients in exactly the right amount.
- Breast milk is easy to digest and is easier on your baby's stomach than formula.
- Breastfed babies tend to be healthier than bottle-fed babies. Breast milk helps to protect your child from common illnesses, such as ear and lower respiratory infections.
- Breastfeeding decreases the incidence of constipation.
- Breastfed children have a reduced rate of allergies and asthma because of breast milk's immunologic properties.
- Breastfed babies are at a reduced risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- In studies, breastfed babies score higher on IQ tests.
- Breastfeeding helps to prevent tooth decay in your child.
- Breastfeeding reduces the rate of childhood obesity.

Health Benefits for Mother

- Breastfeeding helps the uterus return to normal size and position following delivery and helps prevent excessive postpartum bleeding.
- Women who breastfeed have lower incidence rates of breast, ovarian and uterine cancer.
- Breastfeeding produces a hormone that may help the breastfeeding mother relax while the baby is at the breast.
- Breastfeeding helps to keep mother's bones strong and prevent osteoporosis.
- Breastfeeding burns extra calories and may help mother return to her pre-pregnancy weight more quickly.
- Breastfeeding promotes bonding and closeness between you and your baby.

Health Benefits for the Family and the Community

- Breastfeeding is free and requires no special equipment—it saves time and money for your family.
- Feeding your baby at night is easier when you breastfeed.
- Breastfeeding may help to lower healthcare costs, since breastfed infants generally require less medication and office visits.
- Breastfeeding is better for the environment—it produces no garbage and requires no resources such as electric or gas to prepare.

“Breastfeeding is a mother’s gift to herself, her baby and the earth.” - Pamela K. Wiggins
THE BABY-FRIENDLY® HOSPITAL INITIATIVE

While the benefits of breastfeeding are well documented and breastfeeding rates continue to grow, infants who have breastfed exclusively for the first six months of life make up less than 20 percent of all births in the United States.

The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative is a program sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). It recognizes hospitals that provide optimal environments for infant feeding, primarily breastfeeding. Hospitals that receive the Baby-Friendly designation educate and empower women to successfully initiate breastfeeding, encourage them to exclusively breastfeed their children for the first six months of life, and support those mothers who choose other feeding methods.

The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative protects, promotes and supports breastfeeding through the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding for Hospitals. Each hospital recognized as being Baby-Friendly has adopted these steps into practice in their facility.

As hospitals move towards becoming Baby-Friendly, several prevailing principles begin to emerge, including the following:

- Practices that promote, protect and support successful breastfeeding become routine.
  - Early skin-to-skin contact is encouraged.
  - Education regarding effective breastfeeding techniques is readily available.
- Practices that undermine and deter breastfeeding are discouraged or ended.
  - Complimentary pacifiers are no longer offered.
  - Infants are not separated from their mother unless medically necessary.
- All staff who take care of women and their infants are trained and knowledgeable in breastfeeding support.
- Staff provide the same amount of care, support and education to families who decide to use feeding methods other than breastfeeding or who refuse any information offered.

Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding Baby-Friendly® USA, Inc.

- **Step One:** Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all healthcare staff.
- **Step Two:** Train all healthcare staff in the skills necessary to implement this policy.
- **Step Three:** Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
- **Step Four:** Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth.
- **Step Five:** Show mothers how to breastfeed and maintain lactation, even if they are separated from their infants.
- **Step Six:** Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated.
- **Step Seven:** Practice “rooming in”—allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
- **Step Eight:** Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
- **Step Nine:** Give no pacifiers or artificial nipples to breastfeeding infants.
- **Step Ten:** Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or clinic.

The 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding for Hospitals reprinted with permission from Baby-Friendly USA, Inc. Baby-Friendly® is a certification mark of UNICEF.
BREASTFEEDING: WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU ARE DUE

Breastfeeding requires commitment from all involved. In fact, there is a lot you can do to prepare before your baby is born to help make your experience a success.

• Tell your family and friends that your feeding choice is breastfeeding.
  » Families who are aware of your goal of breastfeeding will be more prepared and supportive when the baby comes.

• Enroll in a breastfeeding class and read some evidence-based literature regarding breastfeeding.
  » Learn all you can before the birth so you know what to expect.

• Avoid free gifts from formula companies.
  » Mothers who have access to the free samples and formula these companies provide tend to stop breastfeeding sooner.

• Discuss breastfeeding with your doctor and your chosen pediatrician.
  » Go prepared with a list of questions you want to talk about and make sure that your providers are aware of your decision.

• Research breastfeeding support that is available in your community.
  » Studies show women breastfeed longer when they have an extensive support network they can reach out to for help when needed.

• Learn about newborn behavior.
  » Learn about feeding cues, latching on, and breastfeeding positions so you are ready when the baby arrives.

Non-Pharmacologic Pain Relief Methods for Labor

When you come to the hospital to deliver your baby, you will be asked what your plans are for your labor and the delivery of your infant. Along with breastfeeding, it is important for you to consider how you plan on handling pain relief during labor.

Some non-pharmacologic methods include:
• Continuous labor support
• Maternal movement and positioning
• Touch and massage
• Patterned breathing and relaxation
What is Skin-to-Skin Care?

- Skin-to-skin care should be practiced immediately after birth and as often as possible during your hospital stay.
- Your baby is dressed only in a diaper and hat and placed against your bare chest, then you both are covered with warm blankets.
- Infants who are placed skin-to-skin following birth are more likely to breastfeed.
- Your baby may actually find her way to your breast on her own with little assistance.
- Anyone can practice skin-to-skin care, including your partner, a family member, or a close friend.

Plan to limit your visitors

- Tell them you are planning on breastfeeding and practicing skin-to-skin care frequently while you are in the hospital and ask them to wait until you get home to visit.
- Limiting visitors will leave more time for you to bond with your infant.

How we may help:

- Only three visitors at a time will be allowed in your room while you are in labor.
- We will ask if you are comfortable having visitors in your room during bedside report, when you are delivering your infant, and after the birth of your baby.
- We will assist you in holding your baby skin-to-skin as soon as possible following birth.
- Your baby will be calmed by your smell and her transition to outside life will be easier.
- Your baby may find her way to your breast on her own. She will learn to feed by being close to you.
- Your baby will be dried, warmed and stimulated following birth and will be placed skin-to-skin within five minutes of birth if she is stable.
- All families will be encouraged to allow their infant to remain skin-to-skin for the first hour of life and practice skin-to-skin care as often as possible while in the hospital, regardless of feeding choice.
- All routine procedures will be delayed until after the first hour of life.

Breastfeeding:
What to do when your baby is new

Plan to limit your visitors

- Tell them you are planning on breastfeeding and practicing skin-to-skin care frequently while you are in the hospital and ask them to wait until you get home to visit.
- Limiting visitors will leave more time for you to bond with your infant.

How we may help:

- Only three visitors at a time will be allowed in your room while you are in labor.
- We will ask if you are comfortable having visitors in your room during bedside report, when you are delivering your infant, and after the birth of your baby.
- We will assist you in holding your baby skin-to-skin as soon as possible following birth.
- Your baby will be calmed by your smell and her transition to outside life will be easier.
- Your baby may find her way to your breast on her own. She will learn to feed by being close to you.
- Your baby will be dried, warmed and stimulated following birth and will be placed skin-to-skin within five minutes of birth if she is stable.
- All families will be encouraged to allow their infant to remain skin-to-skin for the first hour of life and practice skin-to-skin care as often as possible while in the hospital, regardless of feeding choice.
- All routine procedures will be delayed until after the first hour of life.
Remember that breastfeeding is a learned behavior and both of you need time to practice.

- Don’t get frustrated if it takes a while for you both to get it right.
- Be patient and enjoy this special time with your new baby.

How we may help:
- Our nurses are available around the clock to assist with breastfeeding.

Avoid giving your baby pacifiers until you have established a good milk supply.

- If your baby seems interested in suckling, you should offer her your breast for the first few weeks of life.

How we may help:
- Complimentary pacifiers will not be provided.
- Pacifiers may be used for a painful procedure, and as medically necessary, but they will be removed immediately following their use.
- Recommend you see a lactation consultant.
- Provide you with numerous community resources you may contact, if needed.

Understand that your baby will want to nurse often in the beginning.

- Your baby’s stomach is around the size of a marble at birth and breast milk is very easily digested.
- Feeding your baby often helps your milk supply increase. The more milk your baby takes, the more milk your body makes.

How we may help:
- Our nurses and support staff will make hourly rounds between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.
- Any breastfeeding problems you may encounter will be promptly addressed.
- You will be provided with education about normal feeding patterns, feeding cues and other pertinent information while in the hospital.
- A feeding log may be provided for your use.

Feeding Cues: How to Know When Your Baby is Hungry

Your baby will be most alert and interested in breastfeeding during the first couple of hours following birth. After that initial period, it will be important that you are able to recognize when she is hungry as soon as possible.

Some feeding cues to look for are:
- Increased activity and alertness
- Rooting (moving her head back and forth in response to your gentle touch on her face)
- Sucking on her hands or fingers
- Fast eye movements as she begins to wake
- Making quiet sounds while sleeping

Crying and increased fussiness are both very late feeding cues. Waiting to breastfeed until you see these signs will lead to your baby being frustrated and breastfeeding may be more difficult.

Continued on next page
Continued from previous page

**How we may help:**

- We recommend you feed your baby only breastmilk. If you feed your baby formula or even water, she may be too full or sleepy to breastfeed well.
- Supplementing your baby’s diet with anything other than breast milk can decrease your milk supply and hurt your chances of breastfeeding successfully.
- Our nurses will not routinely offer supplementation.
- If you request a formula supplement, a nurse will inquire about your reasons for the request and provide education. Assistance also will be offered.
  - If we are unable to ease your concerns and you continue to desire formula, your request will be fulfilled without prejudice.

**Practice “rooming in” while in the hospital**

- Allow your baby to spend all of her time in the room with you.
- Being together promotes bonding and allows you to respond to feeding cues sooner.

**How we may help:**

- WellStar hospitals practice rooming in with all stable infants.
- Routine procedures, such as the infant’s first bath and newborn lab draws, will be performed by our staff in your room.
- Your baby will not be removed from your room unless medically necessary.

**Feed your baby as soon as she begins showing feeding cues**

- Watch for your baby to begin rooting, mouthing her hand or fingers, or become more alert.
- Feed her as soon as you see these cues and do not wait until she is crying.
- Your baby will be frustrated when she is crying and will be harder to nurse.

**How we may help:**

- WellStar Lactation Consultants are available, with a physician’s order, seven days a week for breastfeeding assistance.
- Our nurses have received specialized training in breastfeeding and are prepared to answer any questions and assist with breastfeeding.
WHAT IS EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING?

Exclusive breastfeeding involves giving your infant no other liquid other than your breast milk. The first four to six weeks of breastfeeding are extremely important in setting your milk supply. The more often you feed your baby, the more milk you will produce. If this amount is very high initially, it will be easier to maintain your milk supply if you have to begin pumping or combine breastfeeding with formula feeding upon your return to work.

Benefits of Rooming in:

• Your baby will sleep better and cry less.
• Your milk will come in sooner.
• Your baby will feed more often and you will learn to recognize her feeding cues more quickly.
• Your baby will be at less at risk of developing jaundice.
• You will get to bond with your baby and spend every precious minute with her.
• Your baby will gain weight faster when she is available to you at all times.
• Families who practice rooming in practice exclusive breastfeeding for a longer period of time and are able to continue to breastfeed longer.

Mothers who plan on practicing rooming in have to be more aware of making sure they get the proper amount of rest.

• Make sure to sleep when your baby sleeps.
• Plan on limiting distractions and visitors for the first few days.
• Find comfortable breastfeeding positions that allow you to rest while your baby feeds.

BREASTFEEDING: A LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR YOU AND YOUR BABY

Breastfeeding is a learned task for all parties involved. Although breastfeeding is the most natural way you can feed your baby, there are certain techniques and learned behaviors that only come easily with time and practice. Two things that can influence your breastfeeding experience are the infant’s position and her latch on your breast.

Positioning:

• The infant’s body needs to remain in alignment with your own in order to achieve a successful latch. There are numerous holds you may use. Try each of them and find what works best for you and your baby.
• Common positions include the cradle hold, the cross-cradle hold, the side-lying position and the football hold.

Latch:

• The way your infant latches onto your breast may affect your ability to breastfeed successfully.
• Incorrect latching may cause irritated, painful nipples and may interfere with your baby receiving adequate amounts of breast milk.
**Side-lying Position**

Lie on your side and place the baby on her side facing the breast. If needed, you may use your lower arm or a rolled blanket to keep the baby positioned correctly.

**Football Hold**

The infant is tucked under the arm of the breast being used with her feet facing your back. Use a pillow behind your back to have room for the baby’s feet. Place a pillow under the baby at your side to bring the baby to breast level.

**Cradle Hold**

Sit in the bed or a chair with your back supported and shoulders level; your forearm supports the baby’s back; your open hand supports the baby’s bottom. The hand opposite the nursing breast supports the breast so you may observe the latch. The baby’s chest and abdomen directly faces the mother’s. If necessary, a pillow may be placed in your lap to bring the baby to breast level.

**Cross Cradle Hold**

Infant is in the same position as the cradle hold, but you use the opposite arm to hold and support the baby at the breast. You use the hand of the same side being nursed to support the breast.
LATCHING BABY ON

- Latching your baby on correctly helps ensure she is getting the correct amount of milk and helps to prevent nipple soreness.

- To achieve the correct latch, support your breast with your hand shaped like a “C.” Your thumb will be on the top of your breast and your fingers will rest underneath. Keep your fingers behind the darker brown area of your breast and out of the way of the infant’s mouth. If the infant’s mouth touches your fingers before she fully has your nipple in her mouth, it will cause her to latch on too soon on the end of your nipple and cause extreme soreness.

- With the baby in position, stroke the infant’s lips with your nipple. Wait for her to open her mouth very wide and tilt the nipple and areola toward the roof of her mouth. While her mouth is wide open, very quickly place your nipple into her mouth.

- The tip of her nose should touch, or be very close to, your breast and it usually is not necessary to hold your breast away from her nose.

- Newborn infants usually stop every few suckles to breathe and swallow. This should be considered normal.
Don’t Forget...Important Tips for the New Breastfeeding Mother

- Sore nipples are usually a sign of a poor latch.
- Your nipples may become tender in the beginning as you and your baby learn to breastfeed.
- Soreness that continues after the first few days may be a sign that your baby is not latching correctly.
- Frequent breastfeeding does not cause sore nipples.
- If your breasts feel overly full, nurse your baby more often to relieve the discomfort.
- Your baby may not have a predictable feeding schedule in the beginning.
- Your baby may feed several times in a couple of hours with stretches of sleep in between. This is called “cluster feeding.”
- Breastfeed whenever your baby is hungry.
- Let your baby tell you when she is hungry, instead of the clock.
- If your baby seems satisfied after the first breast, it is okay.
- If your baby can’t breastfeed for any reason, make sure that you ask your nurse for a breast pump.
- It is important that you begin to pump within six hours of your baby’s birth using a breast pump.
- Our nurses or a lactation consultant will show you how to set the pump up and educate you about proper storage of the milk.
- Removing your baby without breaking the seal may irritate your nipples.

WHAT SUCCESSFUL BREASTFEEDING LOOKS AND FEELS LIKE

- When nursing, your baby’s mouth is open wide, her lips flipped out, and she takes most of the dark area around your nipple into her mouth.
- There is tugging, and maybe some tenderness, but no sensation of pain after the first few seconds of latching on.
- The baby does not easily fall away from the breast while feeding.
- No clicking sounds are heard as the baby breastfeeds.
- The baby’s lips are widely flanged around the breast, creating a seal.
- You can see and/or hear your baby swallowing while she nurses.
- When removing your baby from the breast, insert your finger between the baby’s gums and your breast to break the seal.

When nursing, your baby’s mouth is open wide, her lips flipped out, and she takes most of the dark area around your nipple into her mouth. There is tugging, and maybe some tenderness, but no sensation of pain after the first few seconds of latching on. The baby does not easily fall away from the breast while feeding. No clicking sounds are heard as the baby breastfeeds. The baby’s lips are widely flanged around the breast, creating a seal. You can see and/or hear your baby swallowing while she nurses. When removing your baby from the breast, insert your finger between the baby’s gums and your breast to break the seal.
IT’S JUST ONE BOTTLE…

• Just one bottle may reduce your milk supply, since your baby may not be hungry the next time your milk lets-down.
• Just one bottle may increase your baby’s risk of common illnesses.
• Just one bottle lessens the natural protective effect that your breast milk gives to your baby.
• Just one bottle may lead to your infant no longer wanting to breastfeed. Your infant has to work to breastfeed, but with a bottle the liquid freely flows into her mouth. She may decide that she would rather take a bottle than breastfeed in the future.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY BABY IS GETTING ENOUGH MILK?

• By the end of the first week, your baby makes at least four soft yellow stools and wets at least six diapers every 24 hours.
• For the first month, your baby nurses eight to 12 times every 24 hours.
• Your baby is gaining weight.
• Although most babies lose a little weight immediately following birth, your baby should be gaining weight well at doctor’s appointments.

HOW MAY MY HUSBAND HELP?

He may help you by:

• Practicing skin-to-skin care in the hospital
• Being supportive of your struggle in the beginning days of breastfeeding
• Anticipating your needs prior to and during breastfeeding, such as providing you with a large glass of water or a breastfeeding pillow
• Getting your baby from the crib and bringing her to you to feed
• Helping to change diapers or get your baby dressed
• Sitting and talking to you and the baby while you breastfeed
WELLSTAR’S BREASTFEEDING CENTERS

WellStar’s Breastfeeding Centers at WellStar Cobb, Douglas and Kennestone hospitals provide lactation supplies and products needed for the breastfeeding mother, including baby scales and hospital-grade electric breast pump rentals, nursing pillows and stools, breast pads, nipple shields and special needs feeders. Our certified bra fitters also may fit you for a breastfeeding bra.

The Breastfeeding Centers offer Basic Breastfeeding classes. If you currently are on bed rest in the hospital’s antepartum unit, please contact us.

Phone support is available Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. WellStar’s Breastfeeding Centers at Acworth Health Park and Cobb and Kennestone hospitals also offer private outpatient consultations, by appointment, for assistance after you go home.

As a courtesy, lactation consultation fees will be billed to your insurance company. Please check with your provider for more information regarding this service.

For phone support:
Breastfeeding Center at WellStar Cobb Hospital: 770-732-5247
Breastfeeding Center at WellStar Douglas Hospital: 770-920-6240
Breastfeeding Center at WellStar Kennestone Hospital: 770-793-8087

To make an appointment for an outpatient consultation:
Breastfeeding Center at WellStar Acworth Health Park: 470-956-0055
Breastfeeding Center at WellStar Cobb Hospital: 770-732-5120
Breastfeeding Center at WellStar Douglas Hospital: 770-920-6113
Breastfeeding Center at WellStar East Cobb Health Park: 470-956-0225
Breastfeeding Center at WellStar Kennestone Hospital: 770-793-8088

Additional Breastfeeding Resources:
Cobb and Douglas Public Health: 770-435-7815 or cobbanddouglaspublichealth.com
Cobb County Department of Family and Children’s Services: 770-528-5000 or cobbcountyga.gov
La Leche League of Georgia: 404-681-6342 or lllofga.org
REFERENCES:


NOTES: