

## Your Breastfeeding Plan of Care

### *What to expect*

*This handout explains our basic plan of care for helping you breastfeed your new baby.*

At UW Medical Center, we follow “Ten Steps for Successful Breastfeeding” created by the World Health Organization and UNICEF. As part of these steps:

1. We created and follow a written breastfeeding policy.
2. We have trained our healthcare staff to implement this policy.
3. We tell pregnant women about the benefits of breastfeeding.
4. Breastfeeding is begun within an hour of birth.
5. We show mothers how to breastfeed.
6. Infants are given only breastmilk unless there is a medical need.
7. Mothers and infants stay in the same room.
8. We encourage mothers to breastfeed on demand.
9. We do not offer any artificial teats or pacifiers to the baby.
10. We refer mothers to breastfeeding support groups.



*Breastfeeding provides the perfect food and loving care only you can give.*

### **Why is breastfeeding important?**

- When you breastfeed your baby, you are giving a perfect food and the loving care that only you can provide. You are giving a gift



For helpful videos about breastfeeding, visit the Global Health Media website at [globalhealthmedia.org](http://globalhealthmedia.org). Click on “Our Videos” and then on “Breastfeeding.”

Here are just a few of the video titles:

- *Breastfeeding in the First Hours*
- *Positions for Breastfeeding*
- *Attaching Your Baby at the Breast*
- *Is Your Baby Getting Enough Milk*
- *Increasing Your Milk Supply*
- *How to Express Breastmilk*
- *Storing Breastmilk Safely*
- *What to Do About Nipple Pain*

that will last a lifetime. Breastfeeding reduces your baby’s risk for infections, cancers, obesity, and SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).

- The skin-to-skin contact that happens during breastfeeding helps with *bonding*, the close relationship forming between you and your baby. Even if your baby is not yet ready to latch onto your breast, we encourage early skin-to-skin time because it is very good for your baby to feel the warmth of your body. It is good for you, too. While you are breastfeeding, hormones are released that can help you feel relaxed and calm. These hormones also help your uterus to contract as you recover from giving birth. When your baby sucks and takes the *colostrum* (first milk) from your breast, your breasts respond by increasing the amount of milk.
- If you can’t be near your baby because your baby is being cared for in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU ) or Progressive Care Nursery (PCN), we will help you hand-express or pump. This will help your milk increase.
- Some parents worry that the early colostrum is not enough for their baby. But the small amounts of colostrum are packed with important nutrients that fight infection and help your baby maintain blood sugar. Colostrum also helps your baby pass their first bowel movements.
- Talk with your nurse about how to time the care you need around your baby’s need for feedings.

## **What can I expect while I am in the hospital?**

- Most parents are tired after giving birth. Do your best to sleep when your baby sleeps.
- By the time you arrive on the Mother Baby Unit, you will probably have already put your baby to your breast. You may notice that your baby was wakeful for an hour or more right after birth and then may have entered a long sleep period. Most babies sleep a lot in the first day, but each baby is different. Your baby’s first feedings can be short or long, often or less often.
- The nurses and patient care technicians are trained to help you learn to breastfeed. As needed, they will give you valuable information and support.



One of your baby's feeding cues is moving their hands to their mouth.

- As you get to know your baby, your nurses can help you learn your baby's sleeping, waking, and feeding cues. (See the chapter "Getting to Know Your Baby's Body" in this workbook.) Breastfeeding goes best when you put your baby to your breast as soon as you see feeding cues:
  - Mouth and tongue moving
  - Hands to mouth

Sometimes a baby is sleepy and you may not see feeding cues. If your baby is sleepy, we encourage you to bring your baby to your breast about every 3 hours.

- When you bring your baby to your breast:
  - Unwrap your baby, and put your baby skin to skin.
  - Then, hand-express a little milk at your baby's mouth.

This is a way to encourage your baby to wake up and feed. It also gives good hormone messages to your breasts, which helps with milk production. Hand expression is a helpful skill at different times through breastfeeding. It is easy to learn. Your nurses can help.

- Sometimes the natural act of breastfeeding can feel awkward. We are here to help you! Both you and your baby are learning a new skill. See the chapter "Attaching Your Baby to Your Breast" in this workbook for ways to help your baby deeply attach to your breast.
- Your nurse will check on how your baby is *latching* (how your baby's mouth takes your breast). At the beginning of the nursing shift, your nurse will ask you how feeding is going, ask you how you want to be helped, and make a plan with you to call when you are feeding.
- A deep latch and carefully detaching your baby's mouth are the secrets to preventing sore nipples and helping your baby take milk from your breast. See the chapter "Sore Nipples" in this workbook to learn more about preventing and treating sore nipples.
- Our lactation consultants will visit mothers who have had breast surgery, are having a hard time feeding, or have babies who are preterm or in the NICU or PCN. Please tell your nurse if you want to visit with a lactation consultant.

## What can I expect at home?

During your first week at home, many changes in breastfeeding will occur. For most mothers, this is when their milk fully “comes in.”

- To learn more about the next stages of breastfeeding, see the chapters “Common Concerns About Breastfeeding” and “Comfort Measures for Breast Engorgement.”
- To assess how your breastfeeding is going, see the chapter “How Is Breastfeeding Going?”
- For a list of breastfeeding resources, see the chapter “Breastfeeding Resources.”

Take time to look at these chapters while you are in the hospital. Doing so will help you remember to read those chapters if you need them later.

## Before You Go Home

Before you take your baby home, be sure you can check off each of these items:

- I can latch my baby to my breast, either by myself or with my helper.
- I know how to take care of nipple pain and what to do to lessen the pain.
- My baby’s weight loss is in the “normal” range.
- I have set up a well-baby checkup with my baby’s care provider for when my baby is 3 to 4 days old.

We are committed to giving you the help you need to meet your goals for breastfeeding! If you have any questions, please ask us.

**Now, please go back to the Table of Contents in this workbook and check the box so your nurses will know you have read this chapter.**

### Questions?

Your questions are important. If you have questions about breastfeeding, please call Lactation Services: 206.598.4628.