Breastfeeding is
the most precious gift
a mother can give
her infant.
When there is illness
or malnutrition, it may
be a lifesaving gift.
When there is poverty,
it may be the only gift.

LAWRENCE, 1991



Breastfeeding Resource Program 717-531-3754

Lactation Consultants

Karen Campbell, R.N., I.B.C.L.C.
Tracy Dougherty, R.N., I.B.C.L.C.
Carolyn Horst, L.P.N., I.B.C.L.C.
Mary Metzger, R.N., I.B.C.L.C.
Barbara Shocker, R.N., I.B.C.L.C.

PENNSTATE HERSHEY Milton S. Hershey Medical Center

500 University Drive Hershey, PA 17033

PENNSTATE HERSHEY Children's Hospital

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit



Providing Breastmilk for Your Preterm Infant

Benefits of Mother's Own Milk

Nature designed human milk especially for human babies. It is the ideal food for baby's first six months.

Mother's milk contains just the right nutrients in a form that is easy for a baby's body to digest and use, making it the gentlest on a baby's systems.

How is Preterm Mother's Milk Different?

Nutrition: Preterm milk contains more fat, protein, and minerals to promote brain growth, development of the nervous system, and to protect the digestive system.

Protection from infection: Mother's milk has live infection fighting cells, antibodies, that prevent mild to severe infections in babies. Preterm milk has higher levels of these anti-infective properties.

Easily digested: Easy to digest food is important for infants with immature digestive systems. Preterm infants use less energy to digest breastmilk while getting all the right nutrients.

Absorption: How well the body can use the nutrients in food is known as "bio-availability." A preterm infant's body can absorb and use the nutrients found in breastmilk more effectively than nutrients in other milks.

Giving Your Baby Your Milk

There are many ways to provide your infant with your milk. You may want to give your baby just your colostrum, or you may want to provide all of your baby's milk.

The first important step is to begin hand expression and to use a breast pump as soon as possible. Ask your nurse or the baby's nurse to help you learn how to express colostrum.

Pump every two to three hours during the day and evening. Pump one time at night. You need to pump as often as a baby would feed, eight times in twenty-four hours.

The first few times that you use a pump, you may or may not get a few drops of colostrum. This early milk is thick and full of nutrients. It can be clear, yellow, or white in color. Colostrum is food and medicine for your baby.

At first, you will need to store your milk in sterile colostrum containers. After a few days, the volume increases. Always store your milk in the sterile containers and bottles supplied by the hospital. Label and date each container.

Save all of your milk. Refrigerate or freeze your milk until your baby is able to take your milk. Ask the baby's nurse for storage guidelines.

After discharge from the hospital, you will need to continue to use a hospital grade breast pump. A lactation consultant or care coordinator can assist you in obtaining the rental of an appropriate breast pump. Some insurance covers the monthly rental. If not, other financial resources are available.



Questions or Concerns

Please call the Penn State Hershey Breastfeeding Resource Line to speak to a lactation consultant at 717-531-3754.