

# Information for Breastfeeding Families

## Making the Choice to Breastfeed

One of the many decisions to make as a new parent includes whether you will feed your baby breastmilk or formula. Our physicians strongly support breastfeeding as the preferred method for feeding infants.\*

### The Benefits of Breastfeeding

- Human breastmilk is the perfect food for your baby. It has all the right ingredients in just the right amounts.
- Breastmilk has special antibodies that help protect your baby from colds, flu, ear infections, and other illnesses.
- Breastfed children have a lower risk of SIDS, childhood cancers, allergies, and diabetes.
- Breastmilk helps children develop brain cells and improve learning.
- Breastfeeding mothers also benefit as they have a decreased risk of developing breast and ovarian cancer, anemia, and osteoporosis.
- Breastfeeding improves the bond between you and baby.
- Breastmilk is free!

### Skin-to-Skin Contact

At birth, your baby may be placed directly on your chest. This contact allows your baby to go through instinctive stages. These include looking at you, resting, and finally self-attachment to the breast. This initial snuggling also has very important health benefits to mom and baby including:

- Soothes and calms
- Enhances bonding
- Regulates baby's
  - Heart rate
  - Body temperature
  - Breathing
  - Blood sugar
- Helps uterus shrink
- Baby cries less

### Rooming-In

Rooming-in (sharing a room but not a bed with your baby) is good for their overall health and development.

The benefits of rooming in:

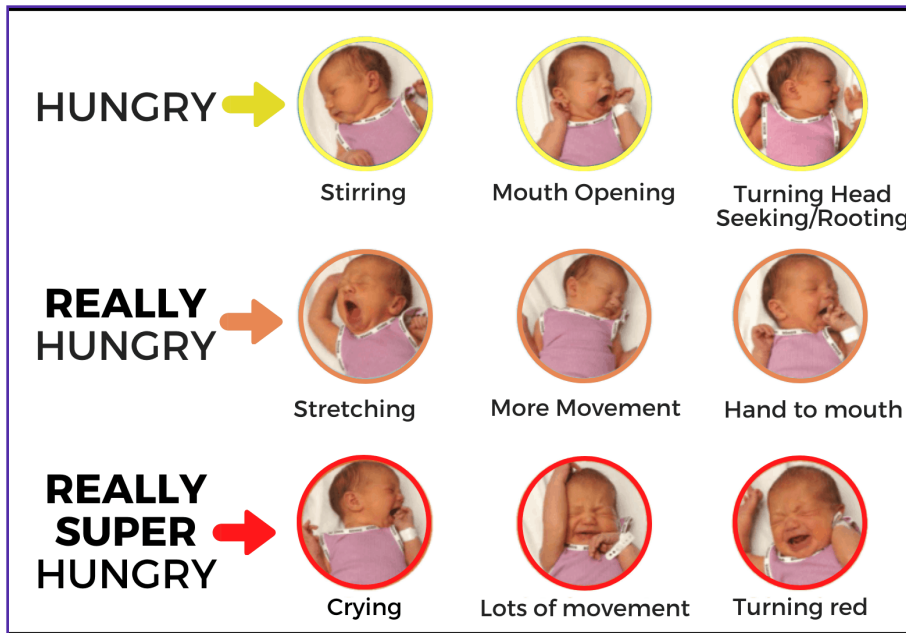
- Can lower the risk of SIDS
- Helps you learn your baby's feeding cues and feed frequently
- Frequent feedings increases your milk supply
- You are close enough to soothe your baby when they cry
- You get more rest by sleeping when the baby sleeps
- Helps you learn to be more confident in caring for your baby

\*ACOG, Clinical Guidelines. Committee on Obstetric Practice, Opinion Number 658, February 2016

## Feeding Cues

How do I know if my baby is ready to breastfeed?

When your baby is ready to breastfeed, they'll show feeding cues – signs they're ready to feed. Rooming in and placing your baby skin-to-skin can help you learn their cues. If your baby's crying, they may be too upset to breastfeed. When this happens, calm your baby first by gently rocking them side to side or through skin-to-skin contact.



## Breastfeeding Education Begins Before Birth

There are many ways you can prepare throughout your pregnancy:

**Learn about breastfeeding.** Read John Muir Health's *Breastfeeding Guide*.

Write down questions you have about breastfeeding and bring them to your next appointment. Sign up to take a breastfeeding class. John Muir Health offers breastfeeding and newborn care classes.

(<https://www.johnmuirhealth.com/events/consumer/browse/index>).

**Gather your support team.** Before you deliver, reach out to those who can help support you through this journey. Family and friends who have breastfed successfully, healthcare providers including obstetricians, midwives, pediatricians, lactation consultants, and the John Muir Wellness Services department can provide valuable resources and support. We can also assist with ordering a breast pump through your insurance.

**Take a virtual tour.** Learn how our nurses and lactation consultants will help you get started with breastfeeding.

<https://www.johnmuirhealth.com/services/pregnancy-obgyn-new-parent-services.html>

**Free educational courses at the Newborn Channel**

Watch online at [www.HealthClips.com](http://www.HealthClips.com) use passcode 01410