

Getting off to a Good Start



Tiny Dreamers
Occupational Therapy



Let's build confidence

My goal is to educate, empower, and guide families to better understand their self and infant's needs while protecting the feeding effectiveness, supply, and experience!

Ways to Facilitate Breastfeeding from Birth

- Collect colostrum through hand expression before birth (discuss with your doctor that there are no concerns for triggering labour in doing this).
- Learn about the Baby Breast Crawl. It is one of the most organizing and regulating ways for baby to start breastfeeding. Remember it might not be possible if there are prenatal or birth complications. Medically supported births may also affect babies alert state and ability to accomplish the breast crawl on their own.
- The first hour is often referred to as the 'golden hour'. Breastfeeding and/or hand expression as frequently as possible is SO important. Evidence shows that ensuring frequent feeding or hand expression during this first hour after birth, can significantly increase milk availability as your milk supply comes in. If you experience complications during the birth that may prevent you from doing so, see if your partner would be willing to support you in this task to help establish a better milk supply.
- Why is skin to skin so important? It helps the birth parent with bonding, milk supply, hormone regulation, and learning baby's feeding cues. It helps baby with temperature regulation, bonding, and having close access to feeding supply.
- Leave the pacifier out of the picture. Pacifiers are not a bad thing, but they can stop us from identifying early feeding cues in young babies, and therefore impact milk intake and supply. Waiting until breastfeeding supply is established with a successful latch and adequate intake is important. Typically, this can take 2-6 weeks depending on your experience. Then go ahead and introduce that pacifier if it's helpful for you or regulating for your baby!

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Setting Up Your Support Systems

1. Who do you want helping you with feedings? Make sure they are learning with you, and that they know what the goals are in the first hours, days, weeks, and months after birth.
2. Who's your backup? When you need a meal, a coffee, a cry, or a nap who are you going to call? Postpartum and learning to feed and care for a baby is hard. Remember this is a time to focus on small successes and asking for help is ok!
3. Partners, this is your time to shine! Be the protector of the feeding and sleep times during these first days and weeks. Ask how you can help with feeding tasks, or provide support with other non-feeding tasks if they are breastfeeding.

Knowing outside supports that can help you!

As a new parent there are a lot of things to consider. I encourage you to make a list or keep a folder of resources that you receive during pregnancy and postpartum. You never know when you or your growing family will need extra support and it's helpful to have support systems or healthcare professionals to refer to.

Family and Social network - those you may or may not want to help or visit you during this transition or addition of a new family member. Protect the feeding and sleep needs!

Health and Wellness supports - Obstetrician, Family Doctor, Psychologists, Crisis Response Centre, Holistic Medicine, and more.

Perinatal support - Lactation Consultant, Occupational Therapist (positioning, ergonomics, mental health, gradual return to lifting or work, and adapted tasks or routines), Physical Therapist (think pelvic floor, hip, back, or shoulder pain), Massage Therapist, Chiropractor, and Dietician

Paediatric support - Children's Therapy Network of Manitoba, Specialized Services for Children and Youth, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Chiropractor, and more.

When it may be time to reach out to your Lactation Consult

Potential reasons to connect with a lactation consultant

- Building your confidence and knowledge in position, latch, and typical feeding cues and patterns.
- Lactating parent is concerned with milk supply (over or under), nipple pain with feeding, positioning trouble due to physical or emotional body pains, timing feeds, feeding cues, pumping, and balancing feedings with daily life.
- Baby may be struggling to get a deep latch, maintain a latch, concerns of a tongue tie, clicking sounds or has sucked in cheeks with latch.
- Baby is late preterm (34-36 weeks) or early term (37-39 weeks) and often considered the great 'pretender' when it comes to feeding, sleep, and regulation.
- Birth interventions that can impact milk supply and alertness of baby to feed - induction, assisted delivery, C-section delivery, or immediate skin-to-skin with baby was not possible.
- Education on formula or combined feeding options.
- Paced bottle feeding.
- Nipple trauma.
- Engorgement management or concerns of mastitis.

And so many more....



Remember, feeding is a daily part of life and learning! This skill can take time for you and your baby to learn. I want to help make learning easier and less overwhelming for you and your growing family!



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Congratulations!

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