

# Breastfeeding

Breastmilk is the natural food for your baby. The longer the babies are fed on breastmilk, the greater the health benefits for mothers and babies. According to the World Health Organization's (WHO's) recommendation, babies should be breastfed exclusively in the first six months and continue to have breastmilk together with solid food in their diet up to 2 years old or beyond.



## The Benefits of Breastfeeding

- Breastmilk provides all the essential nutrients that the baby's needs in the first 6 months of life
- Breastmilk contains many antibodies and immune cells, which help to enhance the immunity of the baby, and reduce the chance of having allergic conditions and infections
- During breastfeeding, the close and intimate contact between the mother and baby greatly enhances the baby's brain development and mother-infant bonding
- Breastfeeding is more hygienic, convenient, economical and environmentally friendly than formula milk feeding

## How to Start

### 1) Preparation During Pregnancy

- Learn more about breastfeeding from various means
- Discuss with medical staff and family members about your decision to feed your baby
- Participate in antenatal discussion and online talks on "**Feeding and Caring for Your Baby**" conducted by Maternal and Child Health Centre and antenatal breastfeeding talk/workshop conducted by your hospital
- Learn about community breastfeeding support services, such as the Breastfeeding Peer Support Scheme, the website of the "Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative Hong Kong Association", etc

## 2) Grasp the “Golden Hour” of Skin-to-skin Contact

- Put your baby to your chest after drying his body with a towel immediately after birth. This allows direct skin-to-skin contact and facilitates him to find your breasts and enjoy the first taste of the colostrum
- Skin-to-skin contact provides the baby with warmth and beneficial flora, and stabilises the heartbeat and breathing. It also enhances the close relationship between you and your baby

## 3) Start effective breastfeeding as early as possible

- Offer your breast according to the baby needs, this allows both you and baby to learn effective “direct breastfeeding” before milk “comes-in”
- Approach health professionals in postnatal ward and Maternal & Child Health Centre for breastfeeding coaching

## Tips of Success

### 1) Rooming In

- Keep your baby close in a cot day and night by the side of your bed, so you can observe and respond to his needs readily

### 2) Feed Responsively

- Feed your baby when she shows early hunger cues, and ensure she passes abundant urine and stools

### 3) Family Support

- Research shows that 8.5 times more mothers are able to continue breastfeeding for six weeks, with support from their partners and families than those who do not

### 4) Seek Help

- Seek help from health professionals and community breastfeeding support services when you are in doubt

### **When you consider feeding your baby with formula milk, you should be aware of the following:**

- Formula milk does not provide babies with any antibodies. Powdered infant formula is not a sterile product. Inappropriate preparation and handling may put the baby's health at risk
- Infant formula is costly. Parents need to spend a considerable sum on the milk powder
- Your body will make less breastmilk once you start to feed your baby with formula milk. You may find it difficult to switch back to breastfeeding

Please read “Love♥Starts from breastfeeding” booklet or contact health professionals for more information.