

## Breastfeeding Your Baby

Breastfeeding can help keep you and your baby healthy. It gives your baby a good start in life.

### Why should you breastfeed?<sup>1</sup>

Human milk is the best food for human babies. Breastfeeding is good for the mother's body as well.

- Breast milk provides **special nutrients** that help your baby grow.
- Breast milk helps **prevent your baby from getting sick.**
- Women who breastfeed are **less likely to get certain types of cancer.**
- Breastfeeding can **save you money.**
- Breastfeeding helps your body **recover faster** after giving birth.
- Breastfeeding helps you **lose weight** faster.
- Breastfeeding may **help prevent your baby from becoming overweight.**

### Be patient.<sup>2</sup>

If breastfeeding is new for you, be patient. Learning to breastfeed takes practice. Knowing what to expect can make it easier.

### What can you do for the first few days?<sup>3</sup>

- Breastfeed for the first time at the earliest two hours after giving birth. Offer your baby milk from both breasts at every feeding.
- It is normal for your breast milk to look yellow at first. This yellowish milk is called colostrum. It has lots of vitamins and immunity builders.
- Your breasts will keep making milk and may get full and heavy if you cannot feed your baby right away. You can get the milk out by hand or with a breast pump.
- Your nipples may hurt a little when you start feeding. Make sure you hold your baby the right way and your baby latches on the right way. Call your doctor if your nipples still are sore after a week, are bleeding, or hot to the touch.
- Your baby needs milk every two hours. Call your doctor if your baby is not latching on to your breasts.
- You may need help to get your baby to nurse. A breast pump can help you make milk.
- Eat healthy foods three to six times a day to stay well.
- Drink a glass of water or low-fat/nonfat milk every time you breastfeed. Your body needs lots of fluids to make milk.



## How long should you breastfeed?<sup>4</sup>

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) suggest that you breastfeed your baby for at least one year if you can. Ask your doctor about the proper way to use a breast pump and how to store breast milk at work.

### We are here to help you.

If you have questions or need help, ask your baby's doctor. Or, you can ask the nurse while you're still in the hospital.

You may need help after you leave the hospital. Call MedCall®, the 24-hour nurse help line. A nurse will answer your questions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We can help you sign up for classes, where available, at no cost to you. We can help you get a breast pump as well, at no cost to you. Ask your doctor for a prescription for a hand-held breast pump. Call the Customer Care Center to help you find a pharmacy that sells breast pumps near you.

Learn more online by going to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/).



### BlueChoice HealthPlan Medicaid

Customer Care Center: **1-866-781-5094**

TTY line: **1-866-773-9634**

MedCall: **1-866-577-9710**

TTY line: **1-800-368-4424**

Breastfeeding Support: **1-800-231-2999**

TTY line: **1-800-368-4424**

[www.bluechoicescmedicaid.com](http://www.bluechoicescmedicaid.com)

TTY lines are only for members with hearing and speech loss.



Medicaid

Sources: <sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Benefits of Breastfeeding* (Accessed August 2009): <http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/benefits/>

<sup>2,3</sup>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Learning to Breastfeed* (Accessed August 2009): <http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/learning/>

<sup>4</sup>National Institutes of Health, *Medical Encyclopedia: Breastfeeding* (Accessed August 2009): <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002450.htm>

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