

# Breastfeeding

## Baby's behaviour before the first breastfeed

Once your baby is born they are usually alert and ready to get to know you. Uninterrupted skin to skin contact is important for all mothers and babies for at least the first hour. This helps:

- baby keep warm
- improve oxygen levels for baby
- baby breathe more regularly
- baby get good bugs from your skin
- protect baby from infection
- baby learn to breastfeed.

Your baby will gradually crawl toward your breast if left skin to skin on your tummy after birth.

Your baby knows what to do. They will:

- start mouthing
- move their hand to their mouth
- lick their fingers
- touch your nipple which makes it erect and easier to attach to.

As your breast touches baby's cheek, baby will turn their head towards your breast. Baby will then open their mouth wide and poke their tongue out over the bottom lip to lick your nipple.

When your baby is ready they will attach to your breast and begin to suck. This usually happens within the first hour of birth.

Babies breastfeed, they don't nipple feed. It is important baby takes a good mouthful of your breast not just your nipple.

Encourage your baby to self-attach for the first feed. You may need to encourage your baby to do this over the first few days or even weeks.

If possible babies should be kept skin to skin with their mother for an hour or more after birth, even if they feed earlier.

### **Ask for help - in hospital**

Remember your midwife will be there to help guide you and answer any of your questions.

**Ask for help – at home**

Call the Breastfeeding Helpline on 1800 mum 2 mum (1800 686 268)

Call the Parent Line on 1300 808 178

Book an appointment with your local Child and Family Health Nurse, call 1300 064 544