

Please see the leaflet *Information for new fathers about breast milk*, which includes information about the important role your partner can play in supporting you at this time and in getting the milk from the maternity unit to your baby at Royal Brompton.

What if I don't want to breast feed?

If you have already decided that breast feeding is not the right choice for you, we hope that you will still decide to express your breast milk whilst your baby is in hospital. Once your baby is well enough, we can then advise you on the choice of artificial milks that are available.

Whilst we understand that this is a very personal decision, we believe that it is important that you are aware that we consider the best possible way to feed your baby is with a mother's own breast milk.

Useful contacts

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet, or would like further support, please contact the foetal cardiac nurse on telephone number 020 7349 7727 or by calling our switchboard on 020 7352 8121 and asking them to 'aircall' Brom 381.

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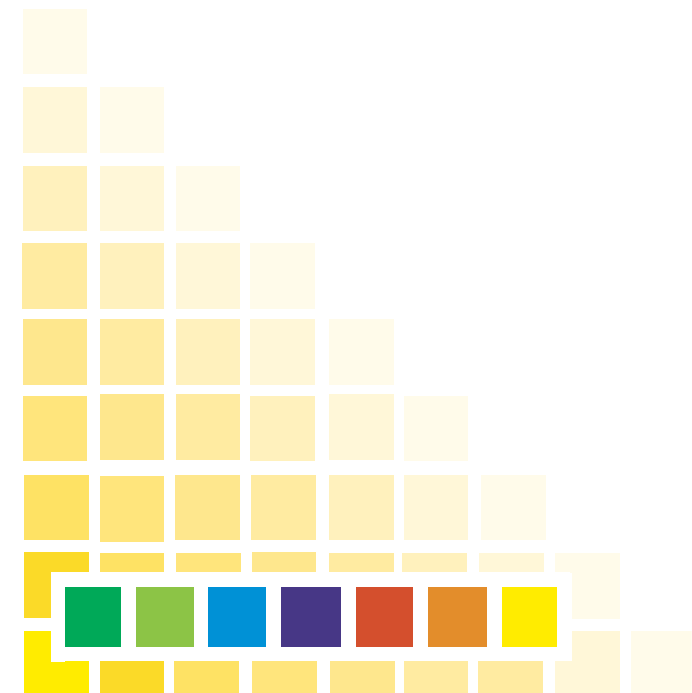
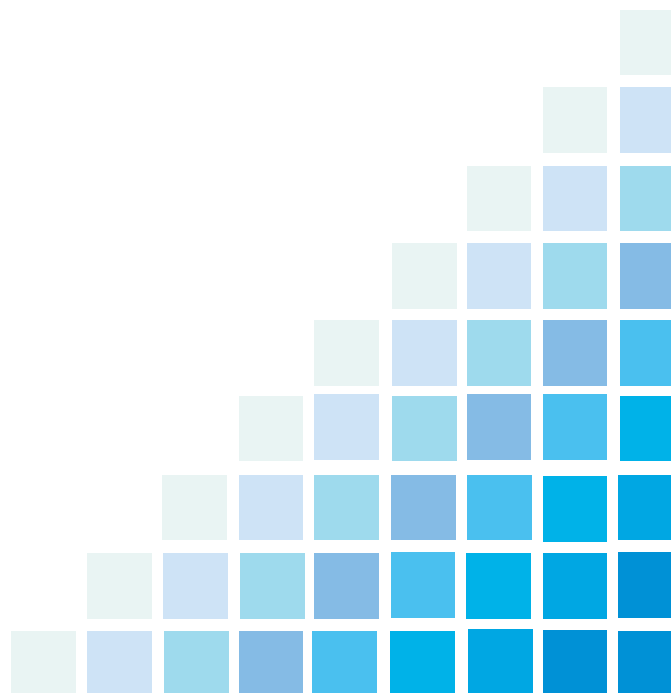
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Antenatal advice for mothers about breast feeding



There are many reasons to encourage mothers to breastfeed their babies. For example, if a baby is unwell after birth or recovering from heart surgery, the intestines ('gut') are vulnerable to a condition known as 'necrotising enterocolitis' or 'NEC' for short. The risk of developing this condition, which is caused by a reduced blood supply to the gut, can be lowered if the milk offered to the baby is the best available.

Research shows that the best milk for babies is breast milk.

What are the benefits of breast milk?

Breast milk has many advantages over substitute milks, including:

- It is easier for a baby to absorb
- It plays an important role in developing your baby's gut
- It provides the baby with valuable antibodies that help fight infection.

We appreciate that at this stage of your pregnancy you may still be considering how best to feed your baby. For the above reasons and many others not listed here, we recommend that you consider making breast milk available to your baby.

What happens when my baby is born?

If you have already decided to breast feed, you may be wondering how to do this if your baby is unwell.

Our Paediatric department has a team of nurses who can help and support you when you are discharged from the maternity unit. If your baby cannot feed naturally from the breast, we can teach you how to express your milk so that it can be given to your baby through a feeding tube in his or her stomach.

How to express milk

There are several ways to express your milk, these include:

- By hand
- Using a hand pump
- Using an electric pump.

Our team of nurses will continue to offer you support and advice about expressing milk during your stay in hospital. This means that when your baby is well enough to be nursed, your milk supply will be built up to a level that will nourish and comfort your baby back to full health.

Beginning to express breast milk

If you decide that you want to breastfeed your baby, it is important that you begin to stimulate your breasts whilst at the maternity unit. This begins the process of milk production.

At first the breasts produce a substance known as 'colostrum' Although this is only produced in small amounts, it is rich in calories and contains vital antibodies that can help fight infections.

When to express breast milk

If you can express your breasts every three to four hours, mature breast milk will begin to be produced around the third day after you gave birth. If you don't express your breasts during this time, it will take longer to begin the process when you arrive at Royal Brompton Hospital. Therefore it is important to let the maternity unit know that you wish to supply milk to your baby whilst he/she is being cared for at another hospital.