







Parent Empowerment Cards

PRENATAL

First Trimester	Second Trimester	Third Trimester
<p>Check out in-person or online breastfeeding classes in your community. Even if this isn't your first baby, a refresher class can be helpful.</p> <p>The WHO and UNICEF encourage prenatal families to learn about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Importance of exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months ○ Value of continued breastfeeding up to age 2 years and beyond ○ The effects of feeding infant formula and how to make an Informed decision ○ The importance of immediate and uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact at birth ○ The importance of early initiation of breastfeeding ○ The importance of mother-baby togetherness in hospital and at home ○ The basics of good positioning and attachment (latching) ○ How to recognize infant feeding cues. 	<p>As your baby grows in your womb, your breasts begin to prepare for feeding your baby. Colostrum (early milk) begins to be produced around the middle of the second trimester.</p> <p>There are many different shapes and sizes of breasts and nipples. Babies can breastfeed from almost all of them!</p> <p>Practice breast self-exam to learn about your breasts. Are there firm areas? Tender areas?</p> <p>If you have a medical condition or have had breast or chest wall surgery, talk to your primary health care provider or specialist to see if you will have any special needs related to breastfeeding.</p>	<p>Learn why being skin-to-skin with baby at birth is important.</p> <p>Learn how to safely be skin-to-skin with your baby.</p> <p>Learn about hand expression of your breastmilk. Expressing colostrum (early milk) and safely storing it for your baby's use soon after birth is sometimes recommended. Talk to your healthcare provider.</p> <p>Prepare your bag and your baby's bag if giving birth at a hospital/birthing centre.</p> <p>Talk to your healthcare provider about when you should go to the hospital/birthing centre.</p> <p>Have you found a suitable CSA car seat? Be sure that it is safely installed in your vehicle. Learn more at: https://www.ontario.ca/page/choosing-child-car-seat</p> <p>Have you found a CSA crib, cradle or bassinet for baby? Learn more at: https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/safe-sleep/cribs-cradles-bassinets.html</p>
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LABOUR AND BIRTH		
Labour	Giving Birth	First Hour After Birth
<p>Have a support person with you throughout labour whenever possible. A labour support person reduces the number of complications and the number of interventions needed during the birth process.</p> <p>Interventions during labour are sometimes needed. Talk to your physician or midwife about the possible impact any intervention may have on your baby and breastfeeding. Make an informed decision.</p>	<p>The delivery of the placenta (afterbirth) triggers a shift in your hormones and 30 – 72 hours later copious milk production begins.</p> <p>Request that your baby be placed skin-to-skin with you immediately after birth unless there is a medical reason not to be skin-to-skin. This is a wonderful way to welcome your baby to the world and has health benefits for both of you!</p> <p>Skin-to-skin with Caesarean births is not uncommon! If you are unwell, baby can be placed skin-to-skin with your partner as long as there is no medical reason preventing this.</p> <p>Skin-to-skin should not be interrupted unless medically necessary. Many procedures can be done while baby is skin-to-skin. Other procedures, such as checking baby’s weight, can be done later!</p>	<p>Keep baby skin-to-skin with you for at least one hour, until completion of the first feed, or as long as you wish unless there is a medical reason not to do so.</p> <p>Ask your health care provider or partner to help ensure baby’s safety while skin-to-skin.</p> <p>If you are unwell, have your partner hold baby skin-to-skin.</p> <p>Offer the breast to baby within one hour after birth. Baby may lick and make some sucking movements.</p> <p>If baby needs medical help, hold your baby skin-to-skin as soon as possible.</p>
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BABY ARRIVES

First 24 - 48 Hours	Leaving the Hospital/Birthing Centre	First Few Days at Home
<p>Watch your baby for feeding cues and feed at least 8 times in 24 hours.</p> <p>This is a learning time for both you and baby. It usually takes awhile to master infant feeding!</p> <p>The stimulus of the baby suckling and removing milk from the breast keeps milk production happening.</p> <p>Baby's stomach size is very small at first and baby doesn't need much milk.</p> <p>Learn how to position and latch your baby so that both of you are comfortable.</p> <p>Learn how to hand express your milk.</p> <p>Ask your health care provider to watch you feed your baby and give you some tips.</p> <p>Remember that the effects of colostrum are diluted if your baby receives other foods or drinks including water or infant formula.</p> <p>Hold your baby skin-to-skin often.</p> <p>Learn ways to soothe your baby. If you are thinking of using a pacifier, talk with someone to be sure that you can make an informed decision.</p>	<p>Be sure to find out how to get help once you are at home.</p> <p>Learn the warning signs that you or your baby need medical assessment. Don't hesitate to reach out to your primary health care provider or a specialist if you have a concern.</p> <p>Registration of your baby's birth can be done online. You can also apply for a birth certificate, social insurance number (SIN) and Canada child benefits. Link is https://www.ontario.ca/page/register-birth-new-baby This should be done within 30 days of the birth.</p> <p>If your baby was born in Ontario, the hospital staff or registered midwife will give you an Ontario Health Coverage Infant Registration form. Complete the form and the hospital or your midwife will submit the form on your behalf. Be sure to keep the bottom part of the form until you get your baby's Ontario health card because it shows the health number assigned to your baby. Your baby's health card will be mailed to you within 8 weeks.</p>	<p>Make sure you have a follow-up appointment for baby with your primary health care provider or pediatrician.</p> <p>Continue to feed your baby in response to feeding cues and at least 8 times in 24 hours.</p> <p>After delivery, colostrum is mixed with newly secreted milk. Breastmilk looks watery compared to cow's milk or infant formula but is perfectly made for your baby!</p> <p>Check that your baby is having enough wet and dirty diapers.</p> <p>If your breasts feel firm and heavy, hand express a little milk. This will make it easier for your baby to latch.</p> <p>Continue to spend some time skin-to-skin with baby.</p> <p>Caring for yourself helps you have the energy to care for baby. Rest, eat regularly, and drink whenever thirsty. Get any needed medical care that you need.</p> <p>When family and friends arrive, put limits around the visit. Accept offers to help and give the person a specific task that would help you. Avoid being a hostess!</p>

If you and baby are separated:

Ask your health care provider to help you begin expressing your milk within 1-2 hours of birth.

Be sure to express (hand express and/or pump) at least 8 times in 24 hours, both day and night.

If someone is wanting your baby to have a supplement:

Ask your health care provider if there is a medical reason to feed your baby a supplement.

Find out if your milk can be used to supplement your baby. If the answer is “no” or you don’t have enough milk, find out if pasteurized milk from a human milk bank can be used.




Find out how long the supplement will be needed.

Find out the various methods that a supplement can be fed to your baby. Tip: Droppers or spoons work well for small amounts!




If you have decided not to breastfeed or to breastfeed and also feed infant formula:

Talk to your nurse or dietitian about the safe preparation, storage and use of infant formula. There is more to know than what is printed on the manufacturer’s label!

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BABY IS HOME: THE FIRST 6 MONTHS		
First Few Weeks at Home	Six Weeks Postpartum	Two Months Postpartum
<p>Feed your baby in response to feeding cues and at least 8 times in 24 hours.</p> <p>Check that baby is having enough wet and dirty diapers.</p> <p>Most babies lose some weight after birth but return to their birth weight by 10 -14 days. Have your baby weighed regularly and get help with breastfeeding if weight gain patterns are a concern.</p> <p>Spend time skin-to-skin with baby every day.</p> <p>Safe infant sleep is important! Have baby sleep in your room if possible. Avoid falling asleep with baby on the sofa or in an easy chair. If you bedshare, learn how to reduce the risks.</p> <p>Do you swaddle your baby? Be sure baby doesn't become overheated and that baby can bring hands to mouth and move legs.</p> <p>Continue to take good care of yourself. Rest, eat regularly, and drink whenever thirsty. Ask friends and family for any needed help.</p> <p>If you have a question or concern, you can call or chat online with a registered nurse at "Health Connect Ontario" or phone 811.</p>	<p>Schedule an appointment for your 6 week postpartum check-up.</p> <p>Think about contraception and consider your options. Get the information that you need to make an informed decision.</p> <p>Have you breastfed in a public place yet? If you feel shy about this, practice in front of someone you trust or a mirror. The Ontario Human Rights Commission provides protection to breastfeed in public places and at work or school.</p> <p>Have you found ways to soothe your baby? Offering the breast and being skin-to-skin with baby can help. Take a break whenever needed. If you are alone with baby, place baby somewhere safe such as their crib, and give yourself a moment to relax. Never shake a baby!</p> <p>Feeling overwhelmed with motherhood? Online mother-to-mother groups, texting, telephone chats, and in-person visits can be helpful. Be sure to talk to your primary health care provider if you are feeling anxious, afraid or sad most days.</p>	<p>Continue to feed your baby in response to feeding cues and at least 8 times in 24 hours.</p> <p>Schedule an appointment for your baby's immunization. Talk to your healthcare provider about breastfeeding and holding baby skin-to-skin to reduce the pain of injection.</p> <p>It takes most people time to transition to parenthood and to get to know their baby. Spending lots of time with baby can help you learn their cues and respond in a helpful way.</p> <p>If you have a question or concern and don't know who to ask, call or chat online with a registered nurse at "Health Connect Ontario" or phone 811.</p>
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BABY IS HOME: THE FIRST 6 MONTHS		
Four Months Postpartum	Six Months Postpartum	Over Six Months Postpartum
<p>Schedule an appointment for your baby’s next immunization. Talk to your healthcare provider about breastfeeding and holding baby skin-to-skin to reduce the pain of injection.</p> <p>Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for 6 months. Continue to feed your baby in response to feeding cues.</p> <p>Feedings may take less time as baby becomes more efficient at breastfeeding. Some babies become more aware of their surroundings and become distracted while feeding. These behaviours are usually not a problem.</p> <p>Feeling overwhelmed with motherhood? Online mother-to-mother groups, texting or telephone chats, and in-person visits can be very helpful.</p> <p>If you have a question or concern and don’t know who to ask, call or chat online with a registered nurse at “Health Connect Ontario” or phone 811.</p>	<p>Schedule an appointment for your baby’s next immunization. Breastfeeding and holding baby skin-to-skin can still help to reduce the pain of injection.</p> <p>Watch your baby for signs of readiness to begin other foods. Baby should be able to sit up, hold their head steady and lean forward; open mouth wide when food is offered; pick up food and try to put it in their mouth; and turn their head away when food is not wanted.</p> <p>Continue to breastfeed and Introduce iron rich foods to your baby at 6 months. Learn more by talking with your health care provider, dietitian or local public health unit.</p> <p>Around 6 months, many babies start teething. If your baby bites down while breastfeeding, get help from someone skilled with helping breastfeeding mothers.</p> <p>The lactational amenorrhea method (LAM) of birth control is not effective once baby is 6 months old. Talk with your primary health care provider about other methods of contraception.</p>	<p>Continue to breastfeed until age 2 years and beyond. Breastmilk remains an important source of nutrition and also provides immune protection for the older baby.</p> <p>Continue to offer your baby a variety of foods. Gradually increase the amount and adjust the consistency of the food as baby gets older. Expect mealtime to be a bit messy!</p> <p>Expressed breastmilk can be used to mix infant cereal and in recipes for your baby. When a recipe has milk as an ingredient, breastmilk can be used.</p> <p>If you have a question or concern and don’t know who to ask, call or chat online with a registered nurse at “Health Connect Ontario” or phone 811.</p>
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