Newborn Feeding Preference

Feeding times are cherished moments between you and your baby. In addition to the nutritional benefits, it’s a time for you and your baby to bond. The decision about how to feed your new baby is one of the first and most important decisions you will make for your baby’s health. You may choose to feed your baby by only breastfeeding, only bottle-feeding, or using a combination of the two.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the healthiest choice for your baby. Babies who are breastfed have a lower risk of respiratory illnesses, ear infections, obesity, and diabetes. If you choose to only breastfeed, keep in mind that:

- Newborns should be fed whenever they are hungry.
- No formula, water, or pacifiers are offered unless recommended by your healthcare provider.
- Rooming in is encouraged 24 hours a day unless your healthcare provider recommends otherwise.
- Mothers are taught how to breastfeed and maintain lactation even if a medical need for separation occurs.
- A caregiver will tell you about breastfeeding benefits and available educational resources. Lactation consultants are also available to help.

Bottle-feeding

If you choose to bottle-feed your baby with mother’s milk or formula:

- Feed your baby in your arms and never prop the bottle.
- Consider skin-to-skin care as a way to bond with your baby. Skin-to-skin contact calms and soothes your baby and improves your baby’s sleep. It also helps your baby maintain a healthy body temperature and regulates heart rate, blood sugar, and breathing. Ask your care team for a copy of the Intermountain Healthcare fact sheet Skin-to-Skin Care for Your Newborn for more information.

Breastfeeding and Bottle-feeding

If you choose to breastfeed and bottle-feed (using either mother’s milk or formula), be aware that using formula can lead to a decrease in your breastmilk supply and can make breastfeeding more difficult. If you choose to give formula while breastfeeding:

- Always put your baby to breast first before giving your baby a bottle.
- The more you breastfeed or pump, the more milk your body will make. If your baby is not breastfeeding every 2 to 3 hours, your nurse can provide you with a breast pump.
- We encourage you to exclusively breastfeed while in the hospital to help establish your milk supply.
- You can introduce your baby to a bottle when they are 2 to 4 weeks old if breastfeeding has been going well.
- Most babies can switch back and forth from the breast to a bottle without problems once breastfeeding is well established.

What do I need to do next?

1. Read the information provided in this fact sheet.
2. Choose the best feeding option for you and your baby.
3. Ask Intermountain Healthcare nursing staff or lactation consultants about any questions you may have.