



Lactation Support for Fetal Cardiology Patients

At Boston Children's Hospital, we recognize that breastfeeding is important to families and the health of their children. Lactation Specialists work as part of the healthcare team to promote and support breastfeeding. If you have any questions (before or after delivery) please call the Lactation Support Program at: (617) 355-0005.

Can I breastfeed my baby?

If you planned to breastfeed your baby before you learned of your baby's cardiac diagnosis, this plan does not need to change. If you are uncertain about your feeding choice, talk to a lactation consultant about the many advantages your milk can provide for your baby because of their additional medical needs. Breast milk can help fight infections and is easy to digest. Breast milk is an important part of your newborn's healthcare and only you can provide it!

Even if your baby cannot eat right away, you can express your milk with a breast pump to save for later use. If you are interested in breast feeding or bottle feeding your baby pumped breast milk, we encourage you to meet with our lactation specialists prior to and after delivery.

Will I have access to a breast pump in the hospital?

You will have access to hospital grade electric breast pumps during your infant's stay. There are breast pumps available for use in lactation rooms, at the patient bedside, as well as in the family sleep spaces and housing facilities.

Most families will also qualify for a small portable breast pump from their insurance that can be used when you are away from the hospital. If you receive one before you deliver, be sure to bring this pump with you in case you need it. Otherwise, ask your nurse or lactation consultant for help in obtaining a breast pump post-partum.

The hospital will provide you with new, clean bottles to store your milk in, as well as labels to identify the milk as belonging to your baby. Cleaning supplies for your equipment are also provided. Breastmilk is stored in secure freezers and refrigerators, accessible only to staff.

You may not always have immediate access to a refrigerator for pumped milk, especially in the

middle of the night. For this reason, you may wish to bring a small cooler and icepack with you to transport your breastmilk.

When should I start pumping my milk?

- If you are unable to breastfeed right away, begin pumping within 1-3 hours after you deliver to tell your body to begin milk production.
- Continue to use the breast pump every 2-3 hours, for at least 6-8 times each day. Pump both breasts at the same time for about 10-15 minutes using an electric breast pump. If you pump one breast at a time, then pump for 20-30 minutes, alternating breasts every 5 minutes.
- Mothers who pump early and more often, and use hand expression, have more milk after two weeks than mothers who delay pumping initiation. The breast pump is not as effective at removing colostrum as your hands are in the first few days. Ask for assistance to learn hand expression. For a step by step video of how to hand express go to: <http://newborns.Stanford.edu/Breastfeeding/HandExpression.html>
- Track your breast pump use and milk volume by using a smart phone app, or journal/notebook to review your progress.

What is colostrum?

- In the first days, mothers may only get small drops of yellow gold fluid called Colostrum. SAVE these precious drops! Colostrum is the early breastmilk which contains higher concentrations of immune properties and other protective components than mature milk.

- Use your hands to express the small drops of colostrum into a spoon or container to use for oral care. These small drops can be collected onto a foam tipped swab.
- Infants who are not able to eat by mouth, and/or have a breathing tube in place, can have colostrum swabbed or placed directly on to the inside of the mouth to absorb the immune proteins. Swallowing is not necessary so it is not the same as oral feeding.
- Mothers find that breastmilk oral care motivates them to continue pumping breastmilk and helps parents actively take part in their child's care.

Can we use Pasteurized Donor Human Milk (PDHM)?

- Some mothers may find their milk comes in later, between day 4 and 7, because they are separated from their baby, or had a complicated delivery.
- During this time, if your baby needs to be fed more than the colostrum you are producing, consider using PDHM from a Milk Banking Association. Your hospital may provide this.
- Using PDHM (instead of formula) helps build and maintain your baby's protective immunity in the intestine and maintain exclusive breastmilk feeds by delaying or avoiding formula use
- PDHM is breastmilk from mothers who have been screened by a blood test and health history, and the milk has been pasteurized and checked for bacteria.
- PDHM from an authorized human-milk bank is considered a SAFE source of breastmilk. Using breastmilk from another mother (sister, friend, or through milk sharing on the internet) is not always considered safe. Discuss this with your healthcare team before using shared breastmilk.

Who will help me learn to breastfeed my baby?

- Your baby's healthcare team works together to provide breastfeeding support and education to families

- At Boston Children's Hospital our Lactation Consultants are International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC). They are nurses with expertise in breastfeeding care and experience working with medically complex infants.
- Clinical Licensed Dietitians (RD/LDN) from the nutrition team and Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) from the Feeding and Swallowing Program will also assist in your baby's feeding plan and breastfeeding progress.
- Clinical staff nurses taking care of your baby can also help with your breastfeeding needs.

Do I need to bring any breastfeeding supplies to the hospital?

- Supplies for pumping your milk will be provided, but if you have any special items or custom size breast pump parts you should bring them.
- A nursing bra or hands free pumping bra
- Disposable bra pads
- Your own nursing pillow if desired
- Your personal breast pump for when you are away from the hospital breast pumps
- A large water bottle to carry with you, as well as snacks
- A lunch cooler to transport milk
- The hospital has a Milk Pod Vending machine located near the elevators in the Main Lobby. It sells nursing bras, breastfeeding supplies and spare parts for the breast pump. It also has special feeding bottles and nipples.
- Contact your insurance company during your pregnancy to ask how to obtain a personal breast pump to use after birth