



PREMATURE BABIES need their MOTHER'S MILK



Winnipeg Regional
Health Authority
Caring for Health

Office régional de la
santé de Winnipeg
À l'écoute de notre santé

PREMATURE BABIES NEED THEIR MOTHER'S MILK

Breast milk is the best nutrition for all babies. When a baby is born prematurely, mothers make "premature breast milk" for their baby. This milk is exactly what a premature baby needs.

Even if a mother had not planned to breastfeed, her breasts begin making breast milk after birth. This milk is a precious gift for a premature baby. Therefore, mothers of premature infants are asked to consider pumping and providing breast milk to their premature baby for the first 30 days. This is the critical time when a premature baby needs breast milk the most.

Research shows that premature babies fed their mother's breast milk:

- Have less infections
- Have better digestion
- Have better vision
- Have stronger bones
- Become smarter kids
- Go home sooner

BREASTFEEDING
is a **GIFT** only a **MOTHER**
can give to her **BABY.**



Breastfeeding can also benefit mothers of premature infants:

- Breastfeeding hormones can help mothers cope during this stressful time
- Breastfeeding increases the connection to a premature baby
- Breastfeeding keeps mothers healthier
 - Better weight loss
 - Less risk of breast cancer and weak bones

When an infant is too young or too sick to breastfeed, mothers need to express their milk with a breast pump. It is important to:

- Start expressing your milk as soon as possible – within 6 hours of birth
- Use “hand expression” to collect the small amounts of colostrum in your breasts
- Hand express and pump frequently (8 times a day) to encourage your breasts to make milk
- Use a full-sized electric breast pump that pumps both breasts at the same time
- Use a technique called “hands on pumping” to get all the milk out of the breasts

Nurses and lactation consultants will help mothers to hand express, pump and store their breast milk.



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Children's Hospital Patient Education Committee
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