

## Your Baby's Breastfeeding Plan for Going Home

### *How often should I breastfeed my baby when I go home from the NICU?*

- Your baby's doctor and the medical team will guide you on how many times each day and for how many minutes you should breastfeed.
  - Your baby's weight gain and comfort while feeding will guide the plan.
  - Most babies will go home on the same schedule as in the hospital.
- Breastfeeding takes work and practice.
  - Premature babies or babies who have been sick may not be ready for full feedings from the breast even though they can take full feedings from the bottle.
  - The strength and ability to take full feedings from the breast increases as premature babies grow and reach or even pass their original due date.
  - Aim to finish a feeding within 30 minutes to keep your baby from getting too tired.
    - Look for your baby to sleep around 1 ½ hours or more after a feeding.
- After you leave the NICU, your baby's doctor and/or an outpatient lactation clinic can help you answer any questions. (See our list of lactation clinics you may contact.)

### *How do I know if breastfeeding is going well?*

- You may "feel" the letdown or see drops of milk from your other breast. You may also feel uterine contractions at the beginning of the feeding.
- Make sure your baby is latched well onto your nipple.
- Watch for deep jaw movement and a pause as your baby's mouth fills with milk.
- Look and listen for your baby to swallow.
- Look for milk around your baby's mouth or in the nipple shield if you are using one.
- Your baby should have 6 or more wet diapers a day.
- Your breasts may feel softer after the feeding.
- Your baby's doctor will watch weight gain to be sure your baby is eating enough.

### *What if my milk does not letdown?*

If your baby is fussy or drowsy at the breast, stop and bottle feed. This is usually because your milk is not flowing with a letdown. Try the next feeding at the breast when your baby is more awake.

Some tips to help with letdown:

- Try pumping for a few minutes before breastfeeding.
- Place a warm cloth on your breast before breastfeeding.
- Try using your hand to press the breast during breastfeeding.

- Place a few drops of breastmilk onto the nipple to encourage your baby to suck.
- A supplemental nursing system (SNS) may be helpful. Ask a lactation consultant about this type of breastfeeding aid.

## *What if I am returning to work?*

- California Law helps breastfeeding mothers continue to work, allowing for time and a safe place to pump. Detailed information is available at :  
<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=lab&group=01001-02000&file=1030-1033>
- Before returning to work, try to store enough milk for your baby.
  - Try pumping early in the morning and pumping the breast that your baby did not feed from. This helps match the amount of milk your baby needs while you are away.
  - Practice hand expression of milk in case you are not able to use your pump.
- Making a plan for pumping at work will help maintain your milk supply.
  - Make a list of everything you will need to pump at work.
  - Pack your supplies such as breast pump and milk storage supplies.
  - Plan a schedule to breastfeed or pump 8 times per day for 15 to 30 minutes when using a double kit electric pump. Plan for longer if using a single kit or pumping by hand.
  - Plan for where you will pump and how you can store your milk.
  - Wear clothing for easy pumping.
  - Take a spare shirt in case of leaking.
  - Take quick and easy snacks and drinks to keep yourself healthy.

## *Where can I get more information about breastfeeding after I go home?*

- We highly recommend a breastfeeding evaluation soon after discharge. We have given you a list of local breastfeeding clinics.
- Reliable internet sources for more information:
  - **Latch video:**  
<http://newborns.stanford.edu/Breastfeeding/FifteenMinuteHelper.html>
  - **Pumping video:**  
<http://newborns.stanford.edu/Breastfeeding/MaxProduction.html>
  - **Medication weblinks:**  
<http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/cgi-bin/sis/htmlgen?LACT>    **OR**  
[ibreastfeeding.com](http://ibreastfeeding.com)
  - **General Questions:**  
AAP: [HealthyChildren.org](http://HealthyChildren.org)  
Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine: [bfmed.org](http://bfmed.org)  
La Leche League: [l.li.com](http://l.li.com)  
Other: [kellymom.com](http://kellymom.com)