

# Parents' guide to the infant feeding protocol

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**The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust (RBFT) supports the rights of all parents to make an informed choice about infant feeding.**

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## The aims of the protocol

- All Trust staff will support you in your feeding decision. We believe that breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed your baby and we recognise the important benefits which breastfeeding provides for both you and your child.
- All our staff have been specially trained to help you breast and bottle feed your baby safely and enjoyably.
- During pregnancy, you will have a conversation individually with your midwife, who will discuss the importance of connecting and building a relationship with your baby as well as the importance of breastfeeding, and what to expect immediately after the birth. Most women and their partners find attendance at a feeding class of great benefit, as practical tips are given in a fun, now virtual, session. See <https://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/featured-services/maternity/infant-feeding/> or on our Facebook videos: Royal Berkshire RBFT Maternity.
- Our staff recommend skin-to-skin contact immediately after birth, for as long as you wish and until after the first feed. We will help you facilitate this safely by ensuring your baby's neck is straight, with his/her head tilted back, so that you can see baby's nose and mouth, allowing for easy breathing. We will only suggest delaying this if you are medically unable to do it and if Entonox is used during suturing (stitching perineal tears). You could get your partner to help with this if you wish, until you are able. Staff will support you and your baby to feed during skin-to-skin contact, and we recommend continuing to keep your baby near you and enjoy skin contact as much as possible in the early post-birth period.
- Our staff will assist you with both breast and bottle feeding while in hospital, inform you about feeding cues, how to recognise baby is getting enough milk to drink and the importance of wet and dirty nappies prior going home.
- We will show you how and why you need to hand express (if you are breastfeeding) before you go home.
- We recommend that you avoid the use of bottles, dummies, teats and shields while your baby is learning to breastfeed, as these may alter the way your baby learns to suck. If you or your baby have challenges, then finger feeding with a syringe or using a cup for larger volumes, is usually recommended. Our staff will support you with this.
- Most breastfed babies do not need anything other than breast milk for the first six months. If other foods are medically indicated, this will be explained to you by the staff, before you are asked for permission.

- We will discuss local support clinic details, and helplines facilitated by the Breastfeeding Network (BfN) and others before leaving hospital. The resource list will be placed in your baby's Red book and you can view it on, <https://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/featured-services/maternity/infant-feeding/>. Feeding support information by Unicef and the Global Health Media videos are available in many languages. **Please note that all extra feeding support is 'virtual' at the moment.**

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

C Carter, RM Infant Feeding Lead, June 2016

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