

## Parents' guide to the Infant Feeding Protocol

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The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust (RBFT) is a UNICEF UK Baby Friendly hospital that 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 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 group discussion. See [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/infant\\_feeding.htm](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/infant_feeding.htm) for dates and venues, or book through your midwife.
- Our staff will recommend skin to skin contact immediately after birth for as long as you wish and until after the first feed. Staff will support you and your baby to feed during skin to skin contact. 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 breastfeeding.
- 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 has challenges then finger feeding with a syringe or using a cup for larger volumes is usually recommended, and our staff will support you with this.
- Most breastfed babies do not need to be given 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 inform you of local support clinic details facilitated by the Breastfeeding Network (BfN) and others before leaving hospital.

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