



Most Important Things to Do to Prepare for Breastfeeding

First Trimester (last menstrual period up to 12 weeks)

- ☐ Decide your long term infant feeding preference (e.g., exclusive breastfeeding, supplemented breastfeeding until onset of copious milk, extended combo feeding)
- ☐ Assess the factors that affect your breastfeeding goals to make a plan to address them (e.g. first time parent, multiple birth, medical conditions, family obligations, work)
- ☐ Explore your family history of breastfeeding (e.g., strengths, challenges) and find family members or close friends that may be able to support you
- ☐ Choose and talk to your obstetrician/midwife about your infant feeding/breastfeeding preferences and assess how they can support you
 - Talk to your doctor about medications and your medical history

Second Trimester (13 weeks to 24 weeks)

- ☐ Find your breastfeeding support team
- ☐ Check your insurance coverage for breast pumps and lactation services
- ☐ Look for trusted sources of infant feeding/breastfeeding information
- ☐ Learn about your birth hospital's infant feeding/breastfeeding policies and services
- ☐ Choose your hospital or birth facility (if a choice exists)

Third Trimester (25 weeks to delivery)

- ☐ Assess your risk factors for breastfeeding challenges
- ☐ Learn about hand expression of colostrum
- ☐ Learn how to latch a baby through written and video instruction



- ☐ Get a breast pump and learn how to sanitize and use it before delivery (only after 37 weeks gestation)
- ☐ Consider getting other accessories for the hospital and at home: nursing pillow, nursing cover, nipple shields for flat or inverted nipples, baby scale, etc.
- ☐ Learn the signs of adequate vs. inadequate feeding, safe weight loss limits, how to calculate percent weight loss, how often, and how to use the Newborn Weight Loss Tool™
- ☐ Know when to have your breastfeeding latch, transfer of milk, and baby assessed for feeding difficulties, and learn about the methods used to assess them
- ☐ Learn about safe bilirubin (jaundice), sodium, and glucose levels
- ☐ Prepare for the possibility of needing to supplement temporarily, especially if you have risk factors for delayed lactogenesis II or low colostrum/breast milk supply
- ☐ Decide if you want to bring your own ready-to-feed formula in nursettes and sterile nipples or to rely on the hospital
- ☐ Decide what you want to do if your newborn shows signs of persistent hunger or develops a medical necessity for supplementation
- ☐ Know how and when to supplement with expressed/pumped milk
- ☐ Decide what kind of milk (expressed/pumped breast milk, formula, donor breast milk) and how much to supplement with
- ☐ Take an online or in person breastfeeding class and consider bringing questions
- ☐ Complete reading relevant sections of this book and print out important references
- ☐ Document your entire feeding plan (see Appendix or go to <https://fedisbest.org/resources-for-parents/feeding-plan/>)
- ☐ Share your feeding plan with your obstetrician/midwife
- ☐ Bring your feeding plan to the hospital to share with your obstetrician, pediatrician and health team before you deliver