

## Feeding your baby whilst in hospital

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust promotes breastfeeding as the healthiest choice of feeding for both mothers and their babies. We will provide support and information for all mothers however they choose to feed their baby.

After your baby is born is an important time for you both to get close and get to know each other. A lovely way to welcome your baby to the world is to spend time holding them in skin to skin contact, which will help your baby to feel safe, warm and reassured. This is a good time to offer the first feed, and feeding support will be available to you while you are in hospital.

Keeping your baby close helps you to continue to get to know each other and more easily recognise the signals that tell you if your baby is hungry, thirsty or would just like a cuddle. Responding to these signals before your baby gets upset will help them feel safe and secure.

Walsall Healthcare Maternity Unit does not provide infant formula to new mothers who have made an informed choice not to breastfeed.

### **I would like to breastfeed do I need to bring in formula just in case?**

No, your breastmilk is all your baby needs. If you give your baby formula this will mean your body will not receive the signals to make milk. Some babies can take a while to learn to breastfeed, if this happens you will be encouraged and supported to keep your baby skin to skin, hand express and give your baby the early milk you produce.

### **What do I need to bring with me if I wish to artificially feed my baby?**

You will need to bring with you:

- Starter packs of ready to feed formula (RTF), these packs come with the teats.
- Expect to use around 8 teats and bottles on the first day.

Please do not bring in powdered formula or the larger bottles of RTF, as we do not have facilities for their safe storage or preparation, or facilities for sterilising reusable teats and bottles.

### **How much will my baby need?**

Your baby will take small feeds to begin with, around 20 mls at each feed we would encourage you to feed your baby responsively by watching their feeding cues.

**Will there be much wastage of formula?**

The manufacturers of the RTF advise against decanting and storing formula, so once a bottle has been opened and used, the contents need to be discarded after an hour.

**There are so many brands of infant formula – which one do I choose?**

There are several brands of infant formula with different company names. There is no evidence that one company's formula is better for your baby than any other. The formula you bring should be a whey dominant first milk, unless your doctor or health visitor tells you otherwise this is best type of infant formula for your baby.

**What if I forget to bring formula with me?**

A member of your family will be able to purchase formula on your behalf from local supermarkets/shops, many of which are open for 24hours. Some mothers may choose to breastfeed until the formula can be purchased.

**Changing your mind...**

If you decide not to breastfeed or to stop breastfeeding, it is possible to restart. If you are breastfeeding, it is worth bearing in mind that giving infant formula to a breastfed baby will reduce your milk supply.

**How can I find out more about feeding my baby?**

Please speak to your Community Midwife for more information about your choices surrounding how to feed your baby.

**Information about bottle feeding**

For information about responsive bottle feeding see the "Guide to bottle feeding" leaflet within your Maternity Notes App.

You can find details of your nearest breastfeeding support and social group by asking your midwife, health visitor or looking on your Maternity Notes App.

**Any queries or concerns please contact:**

Community Midwives Office  
Walsall Manor Maternity Unit

01922 65657