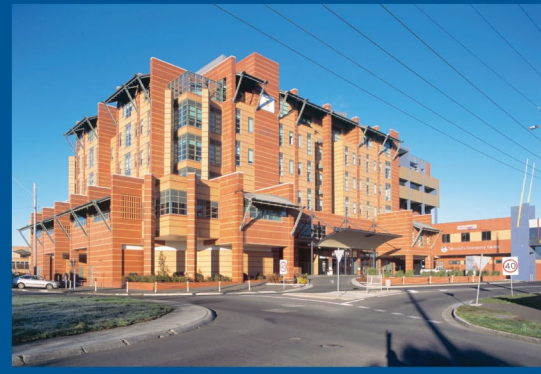


# Breastfeeding: Getting Started



**Benefits of breastfeeding:** Your breastmilk is the perfect food for your baby's growth and development and helps you and your baby to bond strongly. It helps to protect your baby against gastroenteritis, ear and chest infections, allergies, diabetes and childhood obesity. Breastfeeding helps you return to your pre-pregnant weight, reduces the risk of bleeding after birth and reduces your risk of ovarian and breast cancer, and osteoporosis (bone softening) later in life. Breastfeeding is free, safe and convenient.

**Labour and birth practices that can help breastfeeding get off to a good start:** We encourage you to have a trusted support person with you during labour and birth, and where possible to stay active, use comfort measures and non-pharmacological pain relief methods, and give birth in a position of your own choice.

**Uninterrupted skin to skin contact after birth:** Placing your baby skin to skin on your bare chest straight after birth promotes a feeling of closeness, and produces strong hormonal responses. This enables your baby to feel calm and stay warm and to start breastfeeding soon after birth, when baby's instincts are strong. This has been shown to promote breastfeeding success and longer breastfeeding duration.

This initial skin-to-skin contact should ideally continue uninterrupted for at least one hour. Your midwife will help you to recognise when your baby is ready for a feed during this time. Skin to skin contact is also promoted after a caesarean or complicated birth if mother and baby are well, during your hospital stay and at home.

**Getting positioning and attachment right:** Breastfeeding is a learned skill that takes time and patience. Your breasts are soft in the first few days before your breastmilk changes from colostrum (the first milk) to mature milk. This time allows you and your baby an opportunity to learn and practice correct positioning and attachment. This will help to avoid nipple pain and ensure your baby receives enough milk.

**Demand / responsive feeding:** Newborn babies normally breastfeed between 8-12 times in 24 hours in the first few weeks while breastfeeding is being established. This frequent feeding is normal and will change as the milk supply is established and as your baby grows and develops. Demand or responsive feeding helps to ensure your breasts make the right amount of milk for your baby.

**Rooming-in:** This enables you to learn about breastfeeding and your baby's needs, and helps to establish a good milk supply through frequent breastfeeding and skin to skin contact. You will learn your baby's feeding cues such as waking, licking the lips and mouthing, turning the head from side to side, bringing the hand to the mouth and nuzzling into your breasts.

**Avoid the use of teats, dummies and supplementary feeds unless there is a medical need:** Your baby may become confused if offered a teat or dummy while learning to breastfeed. Offering fluids other than breast milk unless there is a medical need may decrease your milk supply. If there is a medical need for extra feeds, your own breastmilk is best, given by a cup or 'finger feed'.

**Exclusive breastfeeding to 6 months:** Most babies who are exclusively breastfed need no other food or drink until around 6 months. After solids are introduced, breastfeeding can continue for up to two years and beyond as long as mother and baby want. You can be confident that your baby is receiving enough breastmilk when you see 5– 6 or more heavy wet nappies, at least one bowel action a day in the early weeks and your baby usually settles after most feeds.

**Learning about breastfeeding:** A free breastfeeding information session is offered once a month on Wednesdays from 3.00pm to 5.00pm or 6.30 pm to 8.30pm. Bookings can be made through Maternity Outpatients. Partners/support persons are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Please turn over for more information....



Ballarat Health Services  
Putting your health first

# Ballarat Health Services Supports Breastfeeding



Ballarat Health Services (BHS) respects and supports a parent's informed choice of infant feeding. We recommend breastfeeding as the optimal choice for both the health of babies and mothers and we are a Baby Friendly Accredited Health Service.

## **Breastfeeding Policy Summary** (The full Breastfeeding Policy is available on request)

At BHS we:

- Give pregnant women, mothers and their families clear and factual information about the importance of breastfeeding and how to breastfeed.
- Support, advise and assist parents and provide the most up-to-date information about infant feeding.
- Support active labour and birth and encourage practices to help with comfort and non-pharmacological pain relief during labour.
- Encourage women to choose their own support people and a position of comfort for birth unless there are medically indicated restrictions.
- Place newborn babies skin-to-skin with their mother straight after birth to allow early breastfeeding instincts to develop.
- Keep mothers and babies together from birth so they can develop a natural pattern of breastfeeding.
- Do not give infant formula to breastfed babies unless there is a medical need and a parent has given consent.
- Avoid giving teats or dummies to newborn breastfed babies.
- Teach mothers how to express and store their breast milk and how to keep up their supply of breast milk if separated from their baby.
- Provide all pregnant women and mothers with information about how to access mother-to-mother peer support for breastfeeding.
- Provide professional breastfeeding support services and refer mothers to them if required when they leave hospital.
- Provide support to our own staff who are breastfeeding after returning to work.
- Teach parents using infant formula how to safely prepare, store and feed it to their baby

## **Getting Help with Breastfeeding**

**Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) 24 hour helpline** Ph. 1800686268 [www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au)

**Ballarat Health Service Breastfeeding Clinic** Ph. 53204977 / 53204533

**Parent Place Breastfeeding Support** Cnr. Sturt and Albert Streets, Ballarat Central  
Ph. 53204977 / 53206871 or drop in Thursdays 1300-1500

**24 Hour Maternal and Child Health Advice Line** Ph. 132229.



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