



Woman's

exceptional care,
centered on you

Breastfed is Best Fed

**Breastfeeding Benefits Both
You and Your Baby**

First Trimester

Making an Informed Decision on Breastfeeding

Congratulations on your pregnancy!

This is an exciting time and the beginning of an incredible journey – a journey marked by many important decisions.

All moms deserve to make an informed infant feeding decision and feel good about it! We want to encourage you to explore your feeding options – both your concerns and the facts about feeding your infant before he or she is born.

Your body will go through many changes during pregnancy. You may have noticed your breasts are tender and your bra is fitting a little tighter. The area around your nipples also may become darker. These are all normal changes that occur during pregnancy as your body is preparing to make the perfect first food for your baby.

Woman's strongly recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of your baby's life, with continued breastfeeding along with complementary baby foods for the first year and beyond. That means nothing but breast milk for the healthy newborn.

Why is breastfeeding so important?

Here are some significant benefits to consider:

- Your baby will have a stronger immune system and be better protected from allergies, asthma, SIDS, childhood cancer and diabetes than if he/she is fed formula.
- Your baby will have a fewer ear infections, respiratory infections and diarrhea – three illnesses that are more common in a formula fed baby's first year of life.
- Breast milk is the perfect food for a baby. Your milk has ALL the right ingredients for growth and development, including those for your baby's brain and nervous system.
- Breast milk is easier to digest so there is less spit-up and gassiness. A happy tummy means a happy baby!
- Breastfeeding safeguards against overfeeding your baby, which means that he/she is less likely to be overweight later in life.
- Breast milk is a gift you give your baby that will last a lifetime!

There are many benefits to you as well.

- It's convenient. Breast milk is free and as long as you and your baby are together, it's always readily available at the perfect temperature. Breast milk stores well and can be frozen for future use, in case you have to be away from your baby.
- You are likely to get your shape back faster when you breastfeed. Your uterus returns to pre-pregnant size quickly and most mothers lose pregnancy weight faster when they breastfeed.
- Your risk of breast and ovarian cancers and osteoporosis are decreased when you breastfeed.
- Feeding time means you get quiet moments throughout your day to sit down, relax and just enjoy your baby.

Making the decision to breastfeed is an important one.

Now is the time to gather information and learn all you can so you can make your feeding decision for you and your baby.

Be sure to talk with your obstetrician and pediatrician. Schedule a breastfeeding class for yourself and your support person. Talk to someone you know who has had a positive breastfeeding experience.

Your Lactation Consultants at Woman's are great resources for accurate and dependable information as well as your WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) breastfeeding support team. We are here to assist and support you as you plan for the arrival of your new baby.

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Woman's exceptional care, centered on you

Founded in 1968, Woman's is a nonprofit organization, governed by a board of community volunteers, providing medical care and services in order to improve the health of women and infants, including community education, research and outreach.