Ten steps for breastfeeding success for the hospitalized infant from the Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin

*If you follow these ten steps below, you should be able to establish and maintain a milk supply so you can breastfeed your baby when they are able.*

**1. Make the decision to provide milk for your baby**

* Human milk is both food and medicine for your baby.
* It protects your baby in ways that infant formula cannot.

**2. Establish and keep up your milk supply**

* Pump every three hours for a minimum of eight pumps per 24-hour period.
* Pump every two hours for some pumping sessions if you are spacing some more than three hours.
* In the first few days of pumping, you will only produce a little bit of breast milk, but it is still important to pump regularly.
* Write down your pumping times and amounts in a pumping log.
* By the end of first week, you should be producing 500 to 1000 ml of breast milk in a 24-hour period.
* If you are producing less than 500 ml in 24 hours, talk to your nurse and find out how to make more breast milk.

**3. Label and store your breast milk**

* Label all milk that you pump with your breast milk label, which includes your baby’s full name, medical record number, and date and time the milk was pumped.
* All milk will be stored in your baby’s bin in the refrigerator or freezer at the hospital.

**4. Remember to bring fresh milk every day**

* We will use fresh milk to prepare your baby’s milk.
* If we don’t use all your fresh milk we will freeze the rest.
* If you have many frozen breast milk containers, we may send some home
* Consider where you will store the frozen containers.

**5. Start skin-to-skin care (kangaroo care)**

* Hold your baby skin-to-skin every day. Ask your nurse to show you how.
* For more information, see guidelines for skin-to-skin care.

**6. Start non-nutritive sucking**

* When your baby is ready, after pumping, we will help you position your baby at the breast.
* During tube feedings, it is helpful to position your baby skin-to-skin at the breast and let your baby taste and lick drips of your milk. Your baby may latch on and suckle a bit.

**7. Practice breastfeeding as much as possible**

* Once the baby is able to feed by mouth, visit your baby as much as possible so you can practice breastfeeding.
* The more breastfeeding practice your baby has, the quicker he or she will learn.

**8. Know if your baby is getting enough milk**

* We will weigh the baby before and after breastfeeding with a breastfeeding Baby Weigh Scale® - the only scale to know exactly how much milk the baby takes from the breast.
* Learn how to do this. It is important to weigh the baby exactly the same way before and after feedings (for example, you cannot change the baby’s diaper).

**9. Get ready for discharge**

* Before going home, come and stay all day or all night to feed and care for your baby.
* Plan to be in the hospital for more breastfeeding sessions if you can.
* Remember to take home your breast milk from the hospital freezer and refrigerator. You may need a larger freezer to store your milk.
* Talk to your baby’s nurse about transporting your milk home.
* For more information, see guidelines for transporting breast milk.

**10. Be patient during your first few weeks at home**

* Your lactation team will help you develop an at-home feeding plan.
* You will go home feeding your baby just like you were feeding in the NICU.
* For the first few weeks at home you will probably need to pump, and possibly give breast milk in bottles a few times each day.
* Be patient. Within a few weeks you will both be in a routine and breastfeeding will be easy.

**There are many benefits to breastfeeding a hospitalized infant for both baby and mother:**

* Protective components in breast milk helps recovery from illness
* Your baby may experience less pain if he/she is breastfed or gets drips of breast milk
* Your baby may breastfeed more often and find comfort at the breast
* You may feel less stress when you are breastfeeding because of hormones
* Breastfeeding helps you feel like you are helping your baby
* The hormones made when pumping or breastfeeding can reduce postpartum depression