

# Prenatal Breastfeeding Key Messages

## Health Care Provider Tool



CHAMPLAIN MATERNAL NEWBORN REGIONAL PROGRAM  
PROGRAMME RÉGIONAL DES SOINS À LA MÈRE  
ET AU NOUVEAU-NÉ DE CHAMPLAIN



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# 8 Weeks

## Plans for feeding your baby

### Question:

- Have you thought about how you will feed your baby?

# Week 8

## Important Points:

- “Breastfeeding is important. The WHO, Health Canada and the Canadian Pediatric Society recommend mothers exclusively breastfeed for the first six months, and continue up to 2 years and beyond along with the introduction of complementary solids.”
- “Exclusive breastfeeding means your baby does not need anything else to eat or drink for the first 6 months.”
- Throughout discussions, ensure the parent is making an informed decision.
- Refer families to: [Caring for Kids – Breastfeeding](#) (website)

Do you have any additional questions or concerns about breastfeeding?

# 12 Weeks

## Questions about breastfeeding

### Questions:

- What have you heard about breastfeeding?
- Have you noticed any changes in your breasts?

# Week 12

## Important Points:

- “As your body prepares to breastfeed, you may see some changes in your breasts during pregnancy. Bodies are designed to breastfeed.”
- See professional resource: [Prenatal Education: Key Messages for Ontario](#) (website)
- Refer families to: [OMama](#) (website and app)

Do you have any additional questions or concerns about breastfeeding?

# 16 Weeks

## The importance of breastfeeding

### Key Points:

- There are many reasons why breastfeeding is important for a mother and for her baby.
- There are risks associated with not breastfeeding.
- It is difficult to reverse the decision once breastfeeding has stopped.

# Week 16

## Important Points:

- “Breastfeeding is normal for a parent and baby. There may be challenges in the first few weeks; get help early. There are health risks associated when choosing not breastfeeding.”
- “Bottle feeding breast milk has some risks such as increased risk of infant overweight, reduced milk supply over time and poorer oral facial development for the newborn. It takes extra time to pump milk and then bottle feed your newborn.”
- Refer families to: *Breastfeeding Matters: An Important Guide to Breastfeeding for Women and their Families* (booklet) or, for lower literacy *My Breastfeeding Guide* (booklet) available on the **Best Start Resource Centre** (website)

Do you have any additional questions or concerns about breastfeeding?

## 20 Weeks

### Prenatal breastfeeding education; starting a breastfeeding plan

#### Question:

- Have you registered for prenatal classes or prenatal breastfeeding classes?

# Week 20

## Important Points:

- “Access prenatal breastfeeding class options at your local health unit or community health centre.” Find a class:

- [Ontariobreastfeeds.ca](http://Ontariobreastfeeds.ca)
- [211ontario.ca](http://211ontario.ca)
- [Thehealthline.ca](http://Thehealthline.ca)
- [Ottawabreastfeeds.ca](http://Ottawabreastfeeds.ca)
- [Renfrewcountybreastfeeds.com](http://Renfrewcountybreastfeeds.com)
- [Parenting in Ottawa](#)
- [Hastings Prince Edward Public Health](#)
- [Eastern Ontario Health Unit](#)
- [KFL&A Public Health](#)
- [Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit](#)
- [Renfrew County and District Health Unit](#)

For a **breastfeeding plan**, refer families to: **Breastfeeding Resources Ontario** (website).

Do you have any additional questions or concerns about breastfeeding?

# 24 Weeks

## Supports while breastfeeding

### Question:

- What supports do you have to help you breastfeed (family, parent-to-parent, professional)?

# Week 24

## Important Points:

- “Get connected with parent to parent (peer) support through your local health unit or La Leche League. Start in your third trimester.”
- “Use help from professionals for breastfeeding expertise (such as lactation consultants) or for any challenges you may encounter.” Refer families to:

- [La Leche League Canada](#)
- [Hastings Prince Edward Public Health](#)
- [Ontariobreastfeeds.ca](#)
- [Eastern Ontario Health Unit](#)
- [211ontario.ca](#)
- [KFL&A Public Health](#)
- [Thehealthline.ca](#)
- [Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit](#)
- [Ottawabreastfeeds.ca](#)
- [Renfrew County and District Health Unit](#)
- [Renfrewcountybreastfeeds.com](#)
- [Parenting in Ottawa](#)

**Do you have any additional questions or concerns about breastfeeding?**

# 28 Weeks

## The importance of skin-to-skin contact

### Key Points:

- Holding your baby skin-to-skin without interruption after birth is really important.
- Skin-to-skin is holding baby bare chest to bare chest.
- Hold your baby skin-to-skin a lot in the first few weeks and months.

# Week 28

## Important Points:

- “Practice skin-to-skin a lot; it regulates your baby’s temperature, breathing and heart rate and it feels great!”
- After birth, hold your baby skin-to-skin right away and continuously for at least the first hour, and for as long as you and your baby wish.”
- “Hold skin-to-skin as much as possible, even for the first months. Your partner may also help hold skin-to-skin.”
- “Hold skin-to-skin and breastfeeding during painful procedures to help reduce pain.”

Do you have any additional questions or concerns about breastfeeding?

# 30 Weeks

## Keeping your baby close in the early weeks

### Key Points:

- Rooming-in with your baby from birth is helpful. This will help you learn your baby's cues, respond quickly to your baby, build your confidence, and get breastfeeding off to a good start.
- Try to have weight checks, tests or exams done in your room. If baby must leave have a parent go along.

# Week 30

## Important Points:

- “Rooming-in or ‘zero separation’ at the hospital and at home:
  - Helps you recognize and respond to your baby’s feeding cues.
  - Makes you become more familiar with your baby.
  - Lowers the risk of SIDS.”
- Right from birth, place your baby on their back to sleep in a crib, in the parents’ room. Share the same room with your child for the first 6 months.
- Refer families to: *Sleep Well, Sleep Safe: A booklet for parents of infants from 0-12 months and for all who care for infants* (booklet) on the **Best Start Resource Centre** (website).

Do you have any additional questions or concerns about breastfeeding?

# 32 Weeks

## Avoiding pacifiers and bottles

### Key Points:

- There are many ways to calm your baby without using a soother or pacifier.
- Avoid using a pacifier or bottle unless medically indicated as these can make breastfeeding challenging.
- Carrying, rocking and holding skin-to-skin are ways to soothe your baby.

# Week 32

## Important Points:

- “When parents use pacifiers it is easy to miss feeding cues; therefore a feed could be missed.”
- “Breastfeeding may take longer to go smoothly or may end sooner because milk supply may be impacted if soothers are introduced.”
- “Babies who use soother are more likely to have ear infections.”
- Support parents to make an informed decision regarding pacifier use.
- Refer families to: [Breastfeeding Resources Ontario](#) (website).

Do you have any additional questions or concerns about breastfeeding?

# 34 Weeks

## How much and how often to breastfeed

### Key Points:

- Watch for and learn your baby's "feeding cues" and feed whenever your baby is hungry.
- It is normal for babies to lose some weight in the early days.
- Breastfeed 8 or more times in 24 hours (day and night) and offer at least both breasts at each feed.
- Frequent feeding is common and does **not** mean your milk supply is low. In fact, the more your baby feeds the more milk your body makes.

# Week 34

## Important Points:

- “Your baby’s stomach is small at birth (about the size of a cherry). Colostrum is the first milk, has many nutrients and antibodies. It is the only milk that your baby needs. Feed your baby a lot in the early days and offer both breasts each feed. Newborns tend to cluster feed ie. could feed hourly at certain times of day.”
- “Early feeding cues are: rooting, hand-to-mouth movements, moving his/her head as if searching for your breast, stirring or stretching. Crying is a late sign of hunger.”
- “You cannot spoil your baby by following their cues; you are simply responding to their needs.”
- Refer families to: *Breastfeeding Matters: An Important Guide to Breastfeeding for Women and their Families* (booklet) on the [Best Start Resource Centre](#) (website).

Do you have any additional questions or concerns about breastfeeding?

# 36 Weeks

## How to hand express

### Key Points:

- Learning how to hand express breast milk is an important skill.
- Hand expression often increases maternal confidence.

# Week 36

## Important Points:

- “Parents who hand express in the first 24 hours after birth make more milk. Give this milk to your baby by spoon.”
- Press, compress, relax.
- View hand expression videos:
  - [Hand Expression of Breastmilk](#) (Stanford Medicine)
  - [How to Express Breastmilk](#) (Global Health Media)
  - [A Video on Hand Expressing Breastmilk](#) (Healthy Families BC)

Do you have any additional questions or concerns about breastfeeding?

# 38 Weeks

## Community breastfeeding supports

### Key Points:

- What other supports do you know of in the community?
- Do you have parent-to-parent support?
- Ask for help as you and your baby learn to breastfeed – you can do this! It can take a few weeks to feel comfortable with breastfeeding.
- If needed, seek help right away.

# Week 38

## Important Points:

- Ask, “What community supports can you access before and after birth?”
- Make supportive statements such as, “I want to support you. If you don’t know the answers we can work together to find them for you.”
- “A reminder, there is nothing like breast milk and breastfeeding for both you and your baby.”
- “There are many ways that a parent/support person can connect with your baby such as holding skin-to-skin, bathing and playing.”

**Do you have any additional questions or concerns about breastfeeding?**

# 40 Weeks

## Reviewing your feeding plans

### Key Point:

- You can create a breastfeeding plan to help guide you and those supporting you.

# Week 40

## Important Points:

- “You can write out a breastfeeding plan.”
- “It is your human right to breastfeeding anytime, anywhere.”
- Refer families to: [Breastfeeding Resources Ontario](#) (website)

Do you have any additional questions or concerns about breastfeeding?

## Websites:

Resource	Web Link	Description
211 Ontario	<a href="http://211ontario.ca">211ontario.ca</a>	Web portal and helpline that provides up-to-date information about health services
Best Start Resource Centre	<a href="http://beststart.org">beststart.org</a>	Web portal which provides multi-media resources in multiple languages
Breastfeeding Resources Ontario	<a href="http://breastfeedingresourcesontario.ca">breastfeedingresourcesontario.ca</a>	Centralized source of quality, evidence-informed resources that support the Baby-Friendly Initiative
Caring for Kids	<a href="http://caringforkids.cps.ca">caringforkids.cps.ca</a>	The site provides parents with information about their child's and teen's health and well-being
Champlain Maternal Newborn Regional Program (CMNRP)	<a href="http://cmnrp.ca">cmnrp.ca</a>	Breastfeeding resources and practical information for health care providers and expecting/new parents
La Leche League Canada	<a href="http://llc.ca">llc.ca</a>	Breastfeeding information and support
OMama	<a href="http://omama.com">omama.com</a>	Website and app that connects women and families to trusted, evidence-informed healthy pregnancy, birth and early parenting information for Ontario
Ontario Breastfeeds	<a href="http://ontariobreastfeeds.ca">ontariobreastfeeds.ca</a>	Provincial directory of breastfeeding services
Ottawa Breastfeeds	<a href="http://ottawabreastfeeds.ca">ottawabreastfeeds.ca</a>	Breastfeeding information and support in the Ottawa region
Prenatal Education Key Messages for Ontario	<a href="http://ontarioprenataleducation.ca">ontarioprenataleducation.ca</a>	Evidence-based online tool that identifies universal key messages for service providers in Ontario
Public Health Unit Locator	<a href="http://phdapps.health.gov.on.ca">phdapps.health.gov.on.ca</a>	Help in finding the nearest health centre
Renfrew County Breastfeeds	<a href="http://renfrewcountybreastfeeds.ca">renfrewcountybreastfeeds.ca</a>	Breastfeeding information and support
Thehealthline.ca	<a href="http://thehealthline.ca">thehealthline.ca</a>	Web portal that provides up-to-date information about health services

To download this document and other breastfeeding resources for families and health care providers, visit the [CMNRP](http://cmnrp.ca) website.

