

A parents' guide to the Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust infant feeding policy

Oxleas NHS Trust supports the right of all parents to make informed choices about infant feeding. All choices will be respected and fully supported. The Trust will encourage you to breastfeed as we believe it is the healthiest way to feed your baby and has important health benefits for both you and your child.

Ways in which we will help you to feed successfully:

- All staff have been especially trained to help you to feed your baby. Whether you fully breastfeed, give expressed breast milk or formula by bottle or fully formula feed your baby we will give you the best possible support and information.
- **During your pregnancy, you will be able to discuss feeding and caring for your baby with a health visitor and by attending a breastfeeding group.**
- As part of your 'New Birth Visit' at 10-14 days a health visitor will help you to ensure your baby is feeding effectively. We will encourage you to feed your baby whenever he or she seems to be hungry and explain to you how you can tell if he or she is getting enough milk.
- **Breastfeeding support groups and Health Advice Drop-in sessions are available for additional support with feeding and caring for your baby**
- Breastfeeding provides the best possible nutrition, but also protection from illness and comfort for babies and mothers. It can be used to feed, comfort and calm babies; babies cannot be overfed or 'spoiled' by too much breastfeeding and breastfeeding in itself, will not tire mothers any more than caring for a new baby without breastfeeding.
- **We recommend that you avoid using bottles, dummies and nipple shields while your baby is learning to breastfeed. This is because they can change the way your baby sucks making it more difficult for your baby to breastfeed successfully. However, if you are breastfeeding and having problems or also using formula milk we will help you to continue to breastfeed and give as much breast milk as possible to your baby, if this is your choice.**
- Night time feeds are very important for young babies, we will give you information about how to manage breast and bottle feeding at night.
- **Most babies do not need to be given anything other than milk for their first six months. We will help you to recognise when your baby is ready for other foods (normally at about six months) and explain how these can be introduced**
- We will give you current, up to date information about how to get help with feeding and caring for your baby, including your local professional breastfeeding support, voluntary groups and national help lines and websites.
- **Breastfeeding is welcome in all health care facilities and Children's Centres in Greenwich. We will give you information about how and where to breastfeed in public places.**