



Hunterdon Health

2026
Preparing for Your Stay
Maternity and Newborn
Care Center



Dear Expectant Parents,

Thank you for starting the registration process for your expected delivery! Pre-admission forms on file will help eliminate the need to visit our Admissions Department, and will ensure that your hospital admittance, at the time of labor, will go smoothly. In order to assure that your registration is complete, please contact our Admitting Department (908-788-6167) as soon as is convenient. This will make certain that your registration is finalized, and will allow the Admitting Department to provide you with any copay information you need to know. If you need to change any of your registration information (such as name, address or insurance information), please call the Admitting Department at 908-788-6167.

Enclosed you will find information that will be helpful to you as you progress through your pregnancy. There is also information about all of the educational services Hunterdon Medical Center offers expectant families. Classes such as Lamaze and Hypnobirth will help you have a more relaxed labor and birth, and the Breastfeeding and Hi, New Baby classes will teach you all you need to know about caring and feeding your baby. Also, our new Spinning Babies® class will teach you techniques to use during pregnancy for comfort as well as prepare your body for labor and birth. *If you wish to register for any of these classes, please refer to the packet that was previously sent, Parenting and Childbirth Education Class Information and Registration. Feel free to call me if you have any questions.*

You will want to check to see if your insurance company covers all or part of the cost of the classes, since many companies see them as valuable in helping you to stay well. Childbirth Education Classes help moms to work with their bodies during labor, thus possibly preventing problems, and saving insurance companies money.

If you have any questions about pregnancy, our services and classes, or the Maternity Newborn Care Center, please don't hesitate to call or email me. We are looking forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,

Felice

Felice Lewaine, BSN, RN, CLC, CCE

Coordinator, Parenting and Childbirth Education Services

Phone: 908-788-MOMS(6667)

Email: flewaine@hhsnj.org



Hunterdon Health



Maternity Registration

Important Insurance Information and Finishing Your Registration

Thank you for starting the registration process for your expected delivery. You may receive a phone call and be asked to come into our Admitting department if there is more information needed, beyond the online form (such as a name change or if you are a new patient to HMC). If you have any questions about the process or any changes to your information, please call Admitting at (908) 788-6167. In addition, our Pre-Certification department may reach out to you about any expected copays or coinsurance amounts.

Payment may be made by personal check, cash, or credit card

(Visa, MasterCard, Discover, American Express)

Checks may be submitted to:

Hunterdon Medical Center

2100 Wescott Drive

Flemington, NJ 08822

Attn: Pre-Certification Department

Your Maternal Health History

Your maternal history may be documented in your child's newborn medical record so the best care can be provided to your child. This information may be accessed (viewed) and/or disclosed (released) to others in accordance with federal and state regulations, unless you object in advanced by completing the "Request for Restriction or Use and Disclosure of Protected Health Information" form. Your nurse or the Health Information Management Department (908) 788-6380 can provide you with the form. Please bring the provided copies of your child's newborn medical record to his/her first physician appointment that you will receive upon discharge.

New Patient?

Please send a copy of your Insurance Card and Photo Id to :

[Maternity Registration](#)



Hunterdon Health

Parenting and Childbirth Education

Parenting and Childbirth Education Classes at Hunterdon Medical Center

The event of a lifetime takes lots of preparation. At Hunterdon Medical Center, we share your excitement and your concern. Our staff, who are also certified childbirth educators and certified lactation consultants, are here to help. Whether this is your first baby or your third, we have classes especially suited to your needs. From childbirth education to breastfeeding, we'll answer all your questions, make the unknown familiar and help you through this exciting time.

Please refer to the previously sent Parenting and Childbirth Education Class Information and Registration packet for complete information.

Or click the link below to view:

[Class Packet 2026](#)



Hunterdon Health

**You may not be able to
bring your nurses
home with you, but...**



Watch your emails around your 36th week of pregnancy! Provided that you have completed your registration process, we will be sending you a personalized code to download our customized Education App to any of your devices!

Once you login, you can begin to learn all about mom and baby care. There is great information on this app, which is unique to Hunterdon's Maternity Newborn Care Center! You may continue to access the app for 18 months after you first login, so it will continue to be a support to you as you move through those early months at home. Please be sure to bring your device with you when you are admitted, as we will be referring to it frequently, and demonstrating all its features, while you are here.

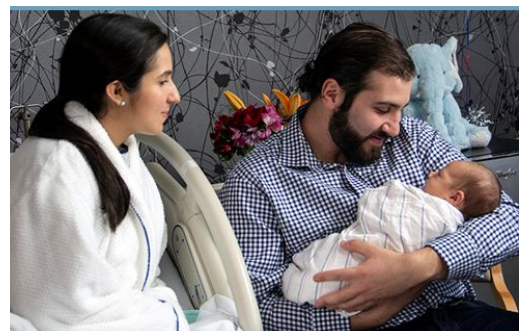


The Maternity & Newborn Care Center at Hunterdon Medical Center

Designed for your comfort throughout the birthing process, the Center provides spacious, private maternity suites where you can labor, deliver, recover and receive postpartum care in a single comfortable environment. Each spacious room can accommodate your partner staying, and keeps you close to our supportive caring staff. The Center also has a special care nursery, as well as a network of designated care facilities providing intensive newborn care.

We are pleased to provide a virtual tour of our Maternity and Newborn Care Center on the Hunterdon Health website.

[Maternity and Newborn
Care Center
Virtual Tour](#)



Choices in Comfort During Labor and an Experienced Medical and Nursing Staff

At the Maternity & Newborn Care Center, expectant mothers can utilize a wide range of therapies and techniques to help ease the labor, birth and recovery process. These include nitrous oxide, whirlpool water therapy, movement, aromatherapy, touch, music, breathing and relaxation techniques. Our wide range of classes assist in guiding a family through their birth experience. During labor, you and your provider make decisions about pain medication. If an epidural is indicated, our board-certified anesthesiologists are available 24 hours a day.

You will be cared for by skilled physicians and a team of dedicated nurses, many of whom have received specialized training and hold advanced degrees and certifications. This specialized training gives our nursing staff the expertise needed to provide care to women throughout the birthing process, from labor and delivery to recovery and postpartum care.



Hunterdon Health

Beyond Delivery



Breastfeeding Services

If you choose to breastfeed, the staff of the Maternity & Newborn Care Center will lend you support and encouragement and help you get started. In addition, Certified Lactation Consultants are available to help you. Once you take your baby home, consultants are available for telephone follow-up and one-on-one consultations if needed. (There is a fee involved for some follow-up services). There is also a monthly prenatal breastfeeding class and breastfeeding support group which meets regularly.

Postpartum and Infant Care Lessons

Before you take your new baby home, you will have the opportunity to learn the basics of infant care by viewing your prescribed videos. Topics include diapering, bathing, feeding your baby, as well as car seat safety, postpartum adjustment, breastfeeding and caring for yourself and understanding the changes in your body. Your nurse is always available for any questions you may have. In addition, our unique postpartum education web-based app will provide you with ongoing support in the months following the birth of your baby.



Services Available During Your Pregnancy

During pregnancy, some women may need referral to other resources. Hunterdon Medical Center has a network of comprehensive programs and services to help women deal with specific issues that may occur.

The Comprehensive Services at Hunterdon Medical Center

NUTRITION EDUCATION: Nutrition counseling services are available to women who have specific nutrition or weight-related concerns during pregnancy.

DIABETES EDUCATION: Our comprehensive Diabetes Management Program includes individualized outpatient services for pregnant women who already have diabetes or who develop diabetes during pregnancy (gestational diabetes).

COUNSELING SERVICES: Individual, relationship and family counseling are available through Hunterdon Behavioral Health.

PRENATAL TESTING: During your pregnancy, your doctor will prescribe routine prenatal tests. Your doctor may also determine if you need additional prenatal tests, which may include blood work, ultrasound or amniocentesis.

Important Facts for Expectant Parents

We are looking forward to seeing you in our Maternity Newborn Care Center when it is time to have your baby. Here is some important information that will help to provide you and your baby with a safe and comfortable environment while you are here. Please make sure you also read the information on Feeding your Baby and Keeping Your Baby Safe.

Admission to the Hospital. If you haven't already, please contact the Admitting Department at (908) 788-6167 to complete your pre-admission forms and provide your insurance information. You may also register online by visiting the [Hunterdon Health](#) website. Anyone that has not been seen at Hunterdon Medical Center before will need to provide Admitting with a copy of your Driver's License and Insurance Card. For your convenience you can send it via email to [Maternity Registration](#). If your insurance information changes after you have registered, please be sure to update Admitting!

Our unit consists of private LDR (labor, delivery, recovery) rooms. You will labor and deliver in one room and then a few hours later will be moved to a private postpartum room. During the birthing process, you might want to take advantage of our whirlpool, birthing balls, aromatherapy and other items on our Labor Comfort Cart. Once your baby arrives, we encourage you to 'room in', that is, keep your baby with you all the time.

When it's time to come to the hospital, you will call your provider who will contact the maternity unit. Upon arrival to the hospital, please enter through the main entrance of the hospital. You will be greeted by a screener who will direct you to the maternity unit. When you arrive on the unit, you might initially be admitted to triage (the assessment) area before going into one of LDR rooms. Your nurse will begin a nursing assessment that includes taking your vital signs and assessing your baby with an electronic fetal monitor, or handheld Doppler. This is a good time to ask any questions and discuss your birth preference list. Your labor nurse will then be able to better meet your needs.

What to Bring...

- Labor review sheets and a watch with a second hand. For Hypnobirth® parents, your rainbow relaxation and birth affirmations tape, birth companion's deepening script and birth guide/prompts
- Music, headphones, wireless speaker
- Focal point
- Socks, slippers, bathrobe if desired
- Chapstick, mouthwash, toothbrush and paste
- Lollipops
- Hairbrush, barrette, rubber bands for long hair
- Small portable fan
- Aromatherapy (potpourri or essential oils) if desired. (No lit candles, but battery tea lights are welcomed)
- Your baby book for newborn footprints, if desired
- Camera



Hunterdon Health

Important Facts for Expectant Parents

What to Bring...

For Mom, After Baby is Born...

- Robe, 3–4 nightgowns. If you plan to nurse, front opening, buttoning gowns are helpful. You can also bring sweats or similar loose fitting clothing if desired. We find that nursing nightgowns frequently don't have openings large enough to be able to breastfeed easily, so please leave these at home.
- Bras, 2 or more (no elastic straps or underwire if nursing)
- If your partner is staying overnight, please remember to pack pajamas for him/her as well!
- 6–7 pairs of panties. We will provide you with disposable panties to wear initially. Most mothers find it more comfortable to switch to their own panties after the first day, although the disposable ones may be washed and worn again.
- Personal care items
- Clothes to go home in

For Baby...

- You may bring clothing for the baby to wear while here; otherwise, your baby will be dressed in a diaper and long sleeved undershirt, and wrapped securely in a receiving blanket.
- Car seat (see "Car Seat Services" elsewhere in this packet).
- Undershirt or onesie
- Dress or stretch suit
- Sweater and hat, if weather is cool
- 4–6 receiving blankets
- Light fleece or polartec snowsuit (no thick snowsuits should be placed under the car seat straps!) and heavy blanket (if it's cold outside).

Telephone Use/WiFi: Because of patient confidentiality, we cannot discuss any details about your admission with anyone. You will have a phone available in your room, and will be able to give your phone number out to have family and friends call in to you. Local calls can be placed directly, and other calls may be made with a phone card or by calling collect. You may also use your cell phone on the Maternity Unit. Please ask visitors to use their cell phones either in your room, or outside of the unit. Cell phone use in the hallway is disruptive to other patients and staff. Free Wifi access is also available..

Visiting Hours and Security Issues: Please see the separate flyers on Safety and Security and Feeding Your Baby.

About Labor Doulas: Hunterdon Medical Center welcomes the services of doulas in assisting our patients during labor and birth. Please be sure to share your plans to use a doula with your provider prior to delivery. Because of our shared commitment to the safety and well-being of our patients and their babies, we will request that your doula read and sign our doula agreement when you are admitted to Hunterdon Medical Center. This document will ask that she uphold the Doula Ethics and Standards of Practice throughout her service to you. If your provider feels that these standards are not being upheld, Hunterdon Medical Center reserves the right to instruct the doula to leave.

Important Facts for Expectant Parents

Photography: For the safety and privacy of all our patients, video/audio recording, still photos, live streaming (e.g. FaceTime) and all social media platform tools, will not be permitted in any area of the Labor and Delivery unit including the Operating Room during delivery until after the baby has been born and stabilized and with the approval of the practitioner. For the privacy of all Hunterdon Medical Center employees there will be no video/audio recording, still photos and or live streaming of employees without their permission.

Your Baby's Doctor: In order to keep your baby safe and healthy, Hunterdon Medical Center's policy is for all newborns to be seen by a doctor within 24–48 hours after discharge. So it will be important for you to have chosen your baby's doctor prior to delivering. Soon after your baby's birth, you will be asked to call your baby's doctor to make an appointment for 1–2 days after you go home, so you must know who that doctor will be. Plan on interviewing and making your choice as early as possible in your pregnancy.

Meals While at the Hospital: Meals at Hunterdon Medical Center are similar to a hotel room service and must be ordered meal by meal. A menu will be available in your room and you will dial 2-5-5-8 on your room telephone to order each meal. Your partner receives one complimentary meal after you have delivered. Additional partner meals may be purchased if you desire. Speak with your nurse if you have any questions about your meal service.

Fire Safety: All hospitals are required to hold frequent fire drills. If our fire alarm sounds during your hospital stay, please remain in your room with the door closed. A staff member will come to your room to answer any questions or to provide further instructions for you.

We're hoping this information will help you prepare for a pleasant experience while you are here.

Please call (908) 788-MOMS or email flewaine@hhsnj.org if you have any questions about any of this information.



Hunterdon Health



Bella Baby In-Hospital Photography

Hunterdon health is thrilled to partner with Bella Baby Photography to help parents celebrate their baby's first moments with stunning, professional photography. Share your little one's debut with family and friends in an artistic style as unique as your growing family.

Bella Baby's experienced photographers bring their artistry and professionalism directly to your hospital room, capturing natural, heartfelt moments in the place where your journey together begins.

Special Offer: Reserve a [Hello World session](#) in advance, prior to your admission to the hospital, and enjoy priority access to your Bella Baby photographer at Hunterdon Medical Center. In addition, you will receive a complimentary wooden commemorative disc-perfect for cherishing this milestone moment forever.

To Register for your [Hello World session](#) and capture your baby's first moments with Bella Baby Photography at Hunterdon Medical Center scan the QR code below or select the link.



English



Español

www.bellababyplan.com/hello-world



Hunterdon Health



Hunterdon Health

Neonatal & Pediatric Medicine

Who We Are and What We Do

Why is a Neonatologist/Pediatric Hospitalist providing my child's inpatient care instead of the pediatrician or family physician?

Neonatologists and Pediatric Hospitalists are pediatricians who specialize in the care of hospitalized newborns and pediatric patients.

Hunterdon Neonatal and Pediatric Medicine offers some significant advantages to our precious newborn and pediatric patients:

- These pediatricians concentrate on and are experienced in the care of newborns and children who require hospitalization—they do not have an office practice.
- One of these pediatricians is present in the hospital 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to be there whenever your newborn or child needs a pediatrician.
- The pediatrician on duty is able to rapidly respond to emergencies in Hunterdon Medical Center's Emergency Department when requested by the emergency department physician.
- The pediatrician on duty is readily available to be present at deliveries if immediate care for a newborn is needed.
- A pediatrician is readily available to care for a newborn in our Special Care Nursery.
- All of our pediatricians have additional experience in neonatology.

Continuity of Care

The Neonatologist/Pediatric Hospitalists provide inpatient care for patients of Hunterdon Pediatric Associates and many family practices affiliated with Hunterdon Medical Center. These specialists do not replace your pediatrician or family physician. However, they do communicate with your pediatrician or family physician when your child is admitted, regularly during your child's hospitalization and the day that your child or newborn is discharged home. This will ensure continuity of care and appropriate post discharge care.

Once Your Baby is Born...

Services for You and Your Family

CHOOSING A DOCTOR: Hunterdon Medical Center Physician Referral Service can provide you with information on our pediatricians, family practice physicians, and specialists. Call 1-800-511-4HMC (4462).

COUNSELING SERVICES: Individual, child, adolescent and family counseling is available through Hunterdon Behavioral Health. Call (908) 788-6401.

FAMILY & FRIENDS CPR: Teaches the lifesaving skills of adult Hands-Only™ CPR, child CPR with breaths, adult and child AED use, infant CPR and relief of choking in an adult, child or infant. This course is ideal for parents, grandparents, babysitters and others interested in learning how to save a life. Call (908) 788-6614 or email CPRinfo@hhsnj.org to register.

Child Evaluation and Treatment

Children and adolescents who have problems in learning, development, growth or any physical challenges are provided with skilled and comprehensive diagnostic testing, as well as treatment programs designed to meet individual needs. For more information on programs available, call (908) 788-6396.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM: An interdisciplinary program for developmentally delayed children from birth to age 3. Includes:

- Developmental evaluation
- Group and/or individual developmental sessions
- Parent support

SPECIAL CHILD HEALTH SERVICES: A resource and referral service for infants, children and adolescents who have special multiple health needs or physical challenges.

PEDIATRIC REHABILITATION: Includes speech-language, occupational and physical therapy for children and adolescents, as well as academic tutoring.

PEDIATRIC SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY: A program for preschool and school-aged children who have speech and/or language delays.

PEDIATRIC HEARING SERVICES: A full range of hearing testing services for children and adolescents is available.

NEURODEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES: Diagnostic services and treatment recommendations provided by a developmental pediatrician.

PEDIATRIC OT AND PT SERVICES: Occupational therapy and physical therapy.





Keeping Your Baby Safe

Security and Visiting Policies

Our visiting policy is designed to allow you the most time to get to know and care for your baby. Hunterdon Medical Center reserves the right to change these policies without notice to provide safe care to our community. Please be sure to discuss any special needs you have with your nurse.

Your Support Person

Who is usually, but not always, the father of the baby and may visit anytime. There is a sleep sofa in each room for his/her sleeping convenience. Children may not stay overnight.

When You're in Labor

Visitors during your labor may distract from the necessary work you need to do. While we understand that you may have special needs at this time, the providers have requested that you have only your labor partner and possibly one other support person with you. These support people should remain in your room. Doula's are welcome. You may provide your room extension to your family members so they may keep in touch by phone, or they may call your cell phone. Due to patient confidentiality regulations, and the priority of providing the laboring mother with care, maternity unit staff will be unable to provide waiting family members with updates on patient status. You may, however, designate one family member to receive updates from staff. Please speak with your nurse when you are admitted to make these arrangements.

Once Your Baby is Born

Grandparents and brothers and sisters of the new baby are welcome to visit. The birth experience is exhausting, and new mothers need time to rest, learn how to breastfeed and care for their new baby and themselves. Because you will need to rest and get to know your new baby, you might suggest to visitors that they keep their visits brief. Visitors will check in at the security desk in the hospital lobby.

The Health and Safety of You and Your Infant are our priority.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Once Your Baby is Born...

Services for You and Your Family

All visitors need to follow these rules:

- We follow the World Health Organization Baby Friendly protocols to support exclusive breastfeeding and bonding: placing your baby skin to skin with you after delivery up to the first feeding. This process of adjusting to the outside world can take over an hour, so we ask that any visitors wait until after this time to see your new baby.
- Visitors should not visit if they are sick, even with the common cold.
- Visitors should always wash their hands before touching the baby.
- We respect patient privacy. Patients are often walking while in labor and do not want visitors watching. Therefore, we ask that visitors stay in your room at all times.
- Children under the age of 18 may not visit, unless they are siblings of the new baby. We also ask that any siblings who have been exposed to a communicable disease in the last two weeks remain home.
- Cell phones may be used in patient rooms only. Please ask any visitors to either use their cell phone in your room, or off of the unit. Using cell phones in the hallway on the maternity unit is disruptive to our other patients.

Security Issues

It will be reassuring and helpful for you to know some basics that will keep your child safe while you are here. Please make yourself familiar with these facts before you have your baby and let staff know if you have any questions or concerns:

- The Maternity Newborn Care Center is a locked unit. Visitors must be admitted into and out of the unit. Parents may enter the special care nursery to visit and care for their baby, but the staff must unlock the door for you.
- Security sensors are placed on the baby's ankle after birth, as are two identification bands. Mother and her partner are given matching ID bands as well. You will be asked to show your band whenever your baby is separated from you and is brought back to you.
- Become familiar with the hospital personnel who are taking care of you and your baby. Know your nurse's name. A white coat, uniform, or scrubs are not adequate identification. HMC employees are required to wear photo identification badges with the photo showing. Feel free to question anyone who comes into your room. Hospital staff will welcome your request to show their photo ID badge.
- Rooming in with your baby is encouraged because it enables you to get to know and care for your new baby. Most procedures can be done in your room, but if your baby needs to go to the nursery for any reason, ask questions about why and how long your baby will be away from you. If you are uncomfortable with anyone who requests to take your baby, or are unable to clarify the reason, please call your nurse.
- While your baby is in your room, be sure to keep the bassinet away from the door, and be able to see your baby all the time. If you need to use the bathroom, bring the bassinet into the bathroom with you.
- Always transport your baby in the hallway using the crib. No one should carry your baby out of the room in his or her arms. Alert your nurse immediately if anyone tries to do so.
- Any visitors should be in your room at all times. See the section on visiting hours for more information.
- Contact your nurse immediately if you have questions about anyone who comes into your room. Tell family members to use the visitor elevators, and not to use the staff elevators or the stairs. Stairs should only be used in the event of a declared fire emergency when instructed to do so by hospital staff.

After You Take Your Baby Home

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS AND SAFETY MEASURES:

- Before discharge from the hospital, find out if there will be any in home follow-up care by home care agencies. Do not allow anyone into your home that says he or she is affiliated with the hospital or home care agency without properly verified identification as issued by the hospital or agency.
- For your records to take home, have at least one color photograph of your baby, full, front-face view, taken along with footprints. Also, compile a written description of your baby, including hair and eye color, length, weight, date of birth and any specific physical characteristics.
- Consider the risk you may be taking when placing your baby's birth announcements in newspapers or online. Any announcements should never include your address and should be limited to your surnames only.
- Avoid the use of outdoor decorations announcing your baby's arrival. Having a baby is, of course, an exciting event, but be aware that potential abductors frequently 'scout' neighborhoods to look for evidence of a new baby in the area. If you do use outdoor decorations, take them down after a day or so.
- Be wary of new acquaintances met during your pregnancy or shortly thereafter. Potential abductors have been known to befriend a new mother, only to take her baby shortly thereafter.
- Be aware that there have been cases in which initial contact with a mother and baby was made in public places such as malls, shopping centers and bus stations.
- If you must take your baby out, whenever possible, take a trusted friend or family member with you as an extra set of hands and eyes.
- Avoid using "Baby on Board" signs on your vehicle as these are an open invitation to a potential abductor.
- Never leave any child alone in a motor vehicle, even for "just a minute." Always take your child with you. Never let someone you don't know pick up or hold your child.

TYPICAL PROFILE OF AN ABDUCTOR:

- Almost always female; may talk frequently about being unable to have her own child, or may have lost a child
- Frequently overweight
- Ranges in age from 12 to 50 years, but usually in her 20s
- Usually no prior criminal record. If there is a criminal record it is usually for shoplifting, passing bad checks and forgery
- Many are employed
- Usually has low self-esteem and copes by lying and manipulating





Feeding Your Baby

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has said that breastfeeding is something that each baby should be doing. So, with all the many benefits of human milk for human babies, is there any reason why you won't be breastfeeding your new baby? Every nurse on the Maternity Unit is specially trained to be able to assist you to successfully feed your baby. Our staff of Lactation Consultants are also here on a daily basis. If you decide to formula feed your baby while you are here, your nurse will teach you how to do that safely.

But why does breastfeeding matter so much? Here are some of the facts:

- **Cost**—formula costs average about \$300 per month, or \$3600 per year.
- **Time**—it takes longer to clean, mix, fill and warm bottles.
- **Healthy babies**—research shows that formula fed infants have more diabetes, greater incidence of some childhood cancers, more childhood obesity, and more illness and hospitalizations in the first year. This includes asthma, ear infections, respiratory and gastrointestinal infections. There are unique components in breastmilk that prevent diarrhea, lymphoma, leukemia, and Hodgkin's diseases, and promote a healthy immune system for your baby.

- **A unique gift**—every mother's breast milk is unique and gives her baby exactly what s/he needs each day. It cannot be duplicated and is a special gift only she can give to her baby. Breast Milk is more digestible than formula, promotes healthy intestinal bacteria and builds immunity to diseases.
- **And for mom**—formula feeding mothers have more osteoporosis, more ovarian and breast cancers, and a slower return to their pre-pregnancy weight.

These benefits are best realized when a mom is *exclusively* breastfeeding, that is, offering her baby nothing but breastmilk (whether it comes directly from her or from a bottle). Some of the benefits don't occur unless she nurses her baby over a longer time. Because of this, the AAP recommends just breastmilk for the first 6 months. After that time, solid foods can be introduced. Breastfeeding should continue for the first year and beyond if mother and baby wish. Although the first weeks and months might be time consuming, the investment is well worth it. While exclusive breastfeeding is recommended in order for mom and baby to get the full benefits, any amount or length of breastfeeding will benefit your baby.



Hunterdon Health



Feeding Your Baby

Prevention of allergies is one more reason to breastfeed!

As you are making your decision, it will be important for you to know that formula feeding increases your baby's chances of developing allergies, asthma, and atopic dermatitis. Consider the following questions:

1. Does either parent have existing, or a history of allergic rhinitis (hay fever), asthma, atopic dermatitis (allergic eczema) or food allergy?
2. If your baby has siblings, do they have any of the above conditions?

If you answered yes to either questions, then your baby is more prone to these conditions. Breastmilk, with its unique properties, helps to prevent allergies from developing.

Breastfeeding is easiest when it gets off to a good start! Taking a breastfeeding class before your baby arrives will give you some great information. Call **908-788-MOMS(6667)** for more information. Here are some things that will make your experience go more smoothly:

Talk to your provider about pain relief during labor.

Taking a childbirth class is a great way to learn about labor and the ways you can help your labor to progress as quickly and efficiently as possible. Knowing what labor is like will actually help your labor to move more quickly, because you will be relaxed, which allows your body to work most efficiently to birth your baby. Classes will also assist you in dealing with the discomfort during labor. You will learn about medicines as well as relaxation, breathing, touch, movement and other methods that can help you as you birth your baby.

Pain medications are available during labor as well. These are safe, but sometimes can impact the early breastfeeding experience because they can affect you or your baby. It will be important for you to know as much as you can about pain relief methods so that you can make an informed choice that is best for you. Make sure you discuss all of the options with your provider and childbirth educator.



Maternal Infant Bonding –important no matter how you feed your baby

New research tells us that all babies go through a series of nine stages right after they are born. This helps them to get used to being outside of their mothers and is essential to the mother and the baby forming a strong bond. This is not much different than the animal world, where infants seek out their mothers immediately after birth, all by themselves. Human babies actually do the same! Research tells us that when a mother has an unmedicated labor, her baby will progress through these stages the best. While pain medications might be needed for your labor, it will be important for you to talk with your healthcare provider about your preferences for your birth, and how to use the least amount of medication so that your baby is not affected. Childbirth classes are a great way to learn how to cope during labor, and will give you many tools, along with medications, that you can use. This 9-stage process takes about 1-2 hours and ends in the baby finding the breast all by himself. If you have chosen to formula feed, it is still important that your baby get the benefits of the stages. Your nurse will simply stop your baby from the last step, which is nursing.

Here are some benefits of having your baby skin to skin:

- Just a few hours of skin to skin right after birth means your baby will stay warmer during your *entire* hospital stay! A mother's chest warms to the exact right temperature that her baby needs to keep him or her warm. And a mom who has twins on either side of her chest will warm each half of her chest differently, according to the needs of that baby! Mom's body works better than mechanical infant warmers. Dad's chest warms also, but since his regulation thermostat isn't quite as fine-tuned, he will continue warming and he and his baby might feel too warm! But there is no reason dad can't enjoy the wonderful feeling of skin to skin.
- Blood sugar levels and breathing are better regulated.
- You will have a better bond with your baby, even one year later!
- Your baby will self-regulate better, even one year later!
- Your baby will cry less and be calmer overall.
- You will have more milk.
- Your baby will 'colonize' or begin to grow your healthy bacteria. Bacteria surround us and each family has its unique mix of good bacteria. Your baby will stay healthier if his body grows this familiar bacteria.
- Skin to skin isn't just for right after birth! Holding your baby skin to skin frequently throughout the first weeks not only feels wonderful, but it helps to remind the baby that it is time to eat. Anytime you feel like it, put your baby, diapered only, against your bare chest. Be sure to have blankets over the two of you. Just putting your baby skin to skin helps to increase your milk supply!

Infant Bonding

Maternal-Infant Bonding (continued)

Immediately after your baby's birth, we will dry your baby and put them skin to skin on your bare chest. A warm blanket and hat will be placed on your baby so you both will stay warm. If your baby needs immediate medical care, however, s/he will be taken across the room to the infant warmer, or to the nursery if needed. If this happens, skin to skin will take place as soon as possible. Your baby will stay skin to skin and your nurse will observe as s/he goes through the nine stages and searches out the breast himself. If any procedures need to be done, they will either be delayed, or done with your baby skin to skin.

We also offer maternal-infant bonding in our OR, depending on patient census, acuity, and staffing at the time, should you have a c/section. Your baby will be assessed by our nursery team after birth and once they are stable, will be brought to you for bonding time. Once you have had your time bonding with your baby, or should you decide to wait until after your surgery to have your bonding time, one of our nurses will walk your support person and your baby down the hall to our nursery until you are settled in the recovery room.

Keep in mind that babies are not born hungry, but they are born with the instinctive ability to find the breast and correctly latch on (or attach) to the nipple. This first nursing may or may not be very long. Think of it as a 'getting acquainted' phase. Doing this in the very beginning means that your baby has 'imprinted' with you, and the next time you nurse, s/he will know exactly what to do! Breastfeeding success is definitely associated with your baby feeding early and often.

Our first priority during this very special time is you, your baby and your partner. Since this early process is so essential to your baby's well-being and to breastfeeding, visitors will be asked to wait until this important time has passed before visiting. You might want to explain this important time to family members before your baby arrives, so they understand just how essential it is to your new baby getting off to a good start, no matter how you choose to feed your baby.



Hunterdon Health

Rooming in and Baby-Led Feeding

We encourage rooming in, that is, keeping your baby with you all of the time. We understand new parents need their rest, but it is so important to keep your baby close to you! Speak with your nurse about rooming in, and she will help you to get the rest you need while you are here. Some of the many benefits to keeping your baby with you are:

- Hands on experience in changing, dressing, burping and holding will help you feel confident sooner.
- Studies show that parents actually sleep *better* with their babies in their room! Perhaps this is because the family feels more secure, knowing their baby is right there.
- There is great benefit to getting to know your baby's early feeding cues. Babies will rouse from sleep, become restless, bring their fingers to their mouth, and make mouthing movements when they are hungry. Crying is actually a very late sign of hunger, and a baby who cries to be fed has been hungry for about a half an hour! Parents will want to reward their babies for the early cues, rather than teach the baby that s/he needs to cry to get their needs met. If the baby is in the room with you, you will be able to see these early cues and feed your baby 'on cue.' This will help feedings go more smoothly. A very hungry baby can't pay attention to what he needs to do to get to the breast.

We encourage you to feed your baby frequently in the first weeks. Babies' stomachs are very small, so they need to eat about 8-10 times a day. But babies eat when they are hungry, and as much as they need, so this timing will be irregular from day to day. And there will be frequent times when your baby might feed well, and then not be hungry for several hours. Or, your baby might 'cluster', or feed every hour for a few hours. This usually happens in the evening and actually is beneficial. The reasons are that the baby is filling up for the longer time of sleep during the night, and it helps your breasts to make more milk. Breastfeeding works on supply and demand: the more frequently you nurse your baby, the faster your milk will come in, and the more you will have. Your supply will match your baby's demand, or need, and will increase as your baby grows.

We understand that everyone is excited to see your new baby and we welcome visitors. But your baby doesn't tell time and will get hungry frequently and at irregular times. In addition, in the short time you are here, you will need as much rest as you can get. We find that families do best when visitors keep their visits brief. This allows you to learn how to care for and feed your baby, as well as to get your needed rest. Talk to your nurse about how to get the rest you need. In addition, many visitors often cause your baby to 'shut down', which leads to feedings that aren't as successful or frequent as they need to be.

Rooming in and Baby-Led Feeding (continued)

We do not provide, nor do we recommend pacifiers or artificial nipples for breastfeeding babies, as this has the potential for causing breastfeeding problems. However, there may be occasions when our lactation consultants recommend a pacifier. With lactation consultant guidance, and careful use, this will not interfere with the breastfeeding process. Since research shows that pacifier use helps to decrease pain, we will use a pacifier for a short time if your baby needs a procedure that may cause discomfort. After three weeks, you may introduce a pacifier or bottle. If you are planning to formula feed, and plan to use a pacifier, please bring one with you.

What about Cesarean birth and premature babies?

Some babies need special care after they are born. Our first priority is to make sure your baby is healthy and gets the immediate care that is needed. So, if you have a Cesarean birth or your baby is in our Special Care Nursery, skin to skin, rooming in, and early feeding may not be possible. However, we will make every effort to make sure these important things are done as soon as your baby's health allows. Make sure you speak with your nurse about getting started with holding your baby close, keeping your baby with you, and getting started with nursing.

Resources you may find helpful:

www.hunterdonhealth.org

<https://www.njsupportsbreastfeeding.org/>

www.infantrisk.com

www.kellymom.com

www.breastfeedingmadesimple.com

www.aap.org/healthtopics/breastfeeding.cfm

www.womenshealth.gov www.infantrisk.com



Planning to Breastfeed?

Some Answers to Your Questions

Hunterdon Medical Center rents Ameda Breast pumps and sells Ameda pump parts. Call **(908)788-MOMS** or **(908)788-6335** for more information. Reservations for pump rentals cannot be made ahead of time. Once you are admitted, arrangements can be made to rent a pump should the need arise.

Insurance companies may cover the cost of buying a pump. Here are some questions to ask when you call:

- Do you cover the cost of pumps?
- If so, what kind? Different types are: hand pump, single battery/electric, or double electric pump (this one is best)
- Do you have a list of vendors for me to use?
- If so, what if they don't have the pump I need?
- As with any telephone call of this type, it is always a good idea to get the name of the person with whom you are speaking, and log the date and time of the call.

Pumps Can Be Challenging! Once You Have Your Pump, Do You Know How to:

- Use your pump the best way to maximize success?
- Assemble and clean the pump?
- Store expressed breast milk safely?
- Feed expressed breast milk from a bottle? Yes, there is a right way to do this!

Register for the Breastfeeding Part II: Pumps and Pumping/Returning to Work class to learn more.

**Hunterdon
Medical Center
rents Ameda
Breast Pumps.
Call
908-788-Moms
(6667)
for more
information.**

**For Breastfeeding
questions
call our
Lactation
Consultants
at 908-788-6335.**



Hunterdon Health



THE BREASTFEEDING PARTNER

First, Congratulations on the Birth of Your Baby! And congratulations to the both of you for choosing to breastfeed—the best way to feed your baby. It might surprise you to know that having a breastfed baby means that you will have more opportunity to be intimately involved in the physical and emotional nurturing of your baby. Imagine all you will be able to do—you can bring your baby to Mom for feeding, unwrapping him, then unsnapping his t-shirt, so that mom and baby can have more skin to skin contact. This increases milk supply, baby's warmth and bonding. When baby stops active nursing on one side, you can offer a burp, then help Mom to place baby at the other breast. When your baby is finished nursing, it is so relaxing to snuggle with both Mom and baby. Partners can actively bond and care for their breastfed babies. If you are a first time breastfeeding Dad/partner, it might be helpful to have a checklist of ways to participate:

Learn about Breastfeeding. Take a class with Mom or read a breastfeeding book, such as *Breastfeeding Made Simple* by Nancy Mohrbacher, or *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*, by La Leche League. Read educational materials given to you in the hospital and in classes. Watch the videos while at the hospital. You play an important role in breastfeeding success, and when you are educated, you will be able to provide helpful information and support for Mom. And you can provide correct information so that family members can support her as well.

Make Arrangements for Household Chores and Errands to be Taken Care of. During the early weeks, both Mom and baby are learning. You all need this time to get to know one another. The more Mom holds and nurses her baby, the more enjoyable and successful her breastfeeding experience will be. This is the only job a mother should be doing during the first few weeks.

Limit Visitors. More than anything, your partner needs rest and time with the baby now. And this is the time that you all are getting to know each other as a family. If you have visitors, be sure they are supporting your choice to breastfeed. Mom could become upset with critical or overbearing visitors. Also, let visitors know what they can do to assist Mom as she learns to care for your baby. Tasks like cooking, laundry, and cleaning can greatly assist you both in the early weeks!

Bond with Your Baby. There are so many ways that partners can actively bond with breastfed babies. Change a diaper, bathe, hold, or rock your baby. Help Mom to be comfortable during nursing and help her position your baby at the breast.

If Breastfeeding is Not Going Well, Get Help for Mom and Your Baby. Both partners and mothers are welcome to call! Bringing Mom in for a professional consultation may be all that is needed to resolve a breastfeeding issue.

Be a Breastfeeding Advocate. Voice your support of your partner's breastfeeding to others. Let them know that you have every confidence in your partner and baby to master the art of breastfeeding, as the human race has done for centuries. Let your partner know how proud you are that she has given the gift of breastfeeding to your family.

For help, call (908) 788-MOMS (6667).



Need Help Installing Your Baby's Car Seat?



There are Two Steps to Car Seat Installation: The seat must be installed into the car, and then the child must be fitted into the seat. Because some seats do not fit into certain cars, necessitating purchase of a different seat, it's best to have a fitting done before your baby is born. Once you've had your baby, we can help you fit him into the seat while you are a patient. Car seats protect best when they are properly installed, but most are not installed or used correctly. Make sure your baby is safe!

A car seat fitting station is sponsored by the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office and is held regularly on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month from 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at the Library Complex on Route 12 in Flemington. No appointment is necessary for this fitting station.

For more information and specific dates please call (908) 788-1129



Parenting and Childbirth Education

908-788-MOMS(6667)



Hunterdon Health