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Breastfeeding: Evans' 5 steps to success

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It is a fact that breastfeeding has many health benefits for a mother and infant. The Department of Health and World Health Organization have a 2020 goal to increase breastfeeding rates both in our nation and around the world.

Hospitals across Colorado have adopted five steps to help reach the goal of increased breastfeeding rates.

Step 1: Breastfeed within the first hour after birth.

This transition begins with an infant being offered the breast right after delivery. Infants use natural instincts to crawl and self attach. This practice is called "skin to skin" and has multiple benefits for mom and baby after birth and beyond the initial latch.

Step 2: Rooming-in.

Mom, dad and baby stay connected to their newborn when the infant isn't sent to a nursery for services. This was common in the past. Most procedures can be done in the patient's room. It gives parents the opportunity to be included in the care of their newborn and provides a good learning experience. It also helps them learn their infant's feeding cues and personality. Most importantly, it promotes bonding.

Step 3: Give no artificial nipples or pacifier.

Infant crib cards can be posted on newborn cribs to remind parents and staff of the importance of having only the mother's breast to practice sucking on in the first week of life. Continuous contact with the mother gives the baby nutrients, comfort, increases the mother's milk production, and helps develop the skills for correct latching. Any outside interference with this process delays the normal development. This is important for the infant's weight gain, blood sugar regulation, and hydration needs.



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Step 4: Give no water, formula or supplemental feedings unless medically indicated.

Evans Army Community Hospital did away with formula gift bags for Families in 2005. Promoting only breast milk during the hospital stay is highly recommended in protecting milk production, and supporting an infant's early initiation to feeding at the breast. In addition, The Joint Commission, which accredits hospitals across the nation, has a new initiative stating all supplemental feedings should be related only to the medical needs of the infant

Step 5: Give resources to every nursing mother after her hospital discharge to continue breastfeeding support.

For the past five years, Evans Army Community Hospital has hosted a Breastfeeding Support Group to support mothers and help them connect to other nursing mothers. The group meets on the first and third Wednesday of the month from 2 to 4 p.m. Infants are weight before and after feedings to reassure moms of their infant's growth and milk production. Each year, the hospital also holds a World Breastfeeding Week celebration during a picnic in Iron Horse Park. Finally, all mothers have an opportunity to see a Lactation Nurse for a consult three to five days after an infant's birth. They can get follow-up support from one of the two outpatient lactation nurses.