

Breastfeeding Support

Carle recognizes that breast milk is nutritionally best for all infants, and we encourage all mothers in their efforts to breastfeed. Our policy is to provide education and support to help ensure mothers who are able and elect to breastfeed have a successful and satisfying experience.

We support the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding as endorsed by the UNICEF/World Health Organization Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative:

1. We have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all healthcare staff.
2. We train all healthcare staff in skills necessary to implement this policy.
3. We inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. We help mothers initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth.
5. We show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation, even if they are separated from their infants.
6. We give breastfeeding newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated.
7. We practice "rooming in"—allowing mothers and infants to remain together unless medically indicated, 24 hours a day.
8. We encourage breastfeeding on demand.
9. We provide no pacifiers or artificial nipples to breastfeeding infants, unless medically required.
10. We foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital.

Learning About Breastfeeding at Every Stage

Prenatal

Early in the prenatal period, patients receive education that promotes breastfeeding from your prenatal provider as well as through Carle's All About Baby Program. Medical reasons for not breastfeeding, risks of formula feeding, and barriers to breastfeeding will each be reviewed on a case by case basis as concerns arise.

Labor and Delivery

Mothers will receive breastfeeding information upon admission to the hospital. Immediately after birth, mother and baby will have skin-to-skin contact to encourage breastfeeding within the first hour. Mother and baby will be encouraged to remain together throughout the entire stay, unless medically indicated.

Our staff will teach several aspects of breastfeeding, including:

- Infant feeding cues, proper positioning and latch.
- How to recognize effective infant sucking and milk transfer.
- The importance of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months.
- Signs and symptoms of infant feeding issues that require referral to a lactation consultant or other qualified health care provider.
- Proper breast milk storage.
- Referral to a lactation consultant when breastfeeding challenges arise.
- Educate and assist mother with proper pumping technique and cleaning of pump equipment.

Continuing Care Outside the Hospital

The Carle Community Breastfeeding Clinic is focused on providing patients and their families a successful and rewarding breastfeeding experience. We acknowledge cultural and personal diversity and promote an individualized approach to care. We recognize that successful breastfeeding is defined by each new mother and her infant. Outpatient appointments are available Monday-Friday by appointment. Families may also call the Breastfeeding Clinic question line 24 hours a day at (217) 326-2610. Breastfeeding mothers will receive additional information about community breastfeeding resources, lactation consultants and support groups when discharged from the hospital.