

<p>Before pregnancy</p>	<p>If you are trying for a baby, or there may be a chance of you getting pregnant, the best advice is to start thinking about how you may want to feed your baby.</p> <p>What happens in your baby's first years has a big effect on how healthy he or she will be in the future. Mum's milk gives your baby all the nutrients he or she needs for the first 6 months of life.</p> <p>Breastfeeding helps to protect your baby from infections and other diseases, and as a mum, it can also help you recover from pregnancy/birth and reduce your chance of getting some illnesses later in life. Breastfeeding also helps you and your baby to get closer – physically and emotionally. So while you are feeding your baby, the bond between you grows stronger.</p> <p>Infant formula is made from cows' milk and other ingredients. It doesn't contain the ingredients that help protect your baby from infection and disease. Only your body can make those.</p>
<p>During pregnancy</p>	<p>The best advice we can give you is to learn about breastfeeding during your pregnancy.</p> <p>Chat to your midwife, health visitor or a peer supporter and attend ante natal classes if you can. It is important to understand what is happening in your body, how and when breastmilk is produced, how to get breastfeeding off to a good start, the importance of a healthy diet, and about avoiding some things such as alcohol.</p> <p>It is also worthwhile to learn how to correctly and comfortably position and attach your baby at the breast and the signs that your baby is feeding effectively. Understand feeding cues, which are the signs to look for when your baby is hungry. All babies are different and responsive breastfeeding is encouraged. During pregnancy you will also be given advice on how to express your breastmilk and store any extra breastmilk.</p> <p>All midwives and health visitors are trained in something called the 'Baby Friendly Initiative' and can provide further information. There are no daft questions. They can also tell you where you can get further breastfeeding support locally and nationally.</p>
<p>After pregnancy</p>	<p>We encourage you to breastfeed your new baby. The World Health Organisation recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months.</p> <p>It is important to continue with a healthy balanced diet. We also recommend avoiding alcohol, as this is best for your breastmilk. It's not always easy so make use of your midwife, health visitor and peer supporters for help and support. If you're struggling, use the breastfeeding checklist your midwife should have discussed with you. Information is also available via your electronic maternity notes app.</p> <p>You may need to work around your baby for the first few weeks. Enjoy the relationship building which is important to help develop a happy, content baby.</p> <p>You may be eligible for Healthy Start vitamins during and after pregnancy. Speak to your midwife or health visitor.</p> <p>Please remember that breastfeeding will not prevent you from getting pregnant.</p>

"Our vision is for all families in North Cumbria to be valued, happy and healthy. We all want the very best for our families"

Further Information on:

Breastfeeding before, during and after pregnancy

Why is breastmilk better for my baby?	Breastmilk initially is in the form of colostrum. This contains some of mums antibodies to help start building baby's immune system. There are hundreds of different components that make up human breastmilk that give it all the nutrients your baby requires to grow healthily. Unlike formula, the make-up of breastmilk changes over time in response to what your baby needs.
What health benefits are there for my baby long term?	Babies who are breastfed have a decreased chance of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhoea and being sick and having to go to hospital as a result • Chest infections and having to go to hospital as a result • Ear infections • Being constipated • Becoming obese, which would make them more likely to develop type 2 diabetes and other illnesses later in life • Developing eczema
What are the longer term health benefits of breastfeeding for Mum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lowers the risk of mum getting breast cancer and may reduce your risk of getting ovarian-cancer • It naturally uses up about 500 extra calories a day, so mums who breastfeed may find it easier to lose their pregnancy weight • It's free
Why is it best not to drink alcohol?	Your breastmilk takes on nutrients, flavours and other components from your own diet. Alcohol can be passed into the breastmilk. A baby's liver and other organs are not mature to process this and it can be harmful.
If my body produces what my baby needs, why might I need to express?	Breastmilk is produced by way of supply and demand, but there is a gap in time. If your baby is a little under the weather (or just not as hungry as the day before) your breasts may become very full. By expressing you will relieve your breasts and ensure there is an adequate supply of milk going forward. Additionally it means that your baby can still have mum's milk if someone else is feeding them. Try to wait until you and baby are confident in breastfeeding before introducing bottles. Expressing can usually start at around 2 weeks after birth.
What can partners and wider family do to help?	Partners and family can help by understanding that for a while you are the only source of food and drink for your new baby and therefore other jobs may have to put to one side. By educating themselves about what good positioning and attachment look like they can support you when it's difficult to see for yourself. Simple things like getting you a drink or snack can also be really helpful when you are trying to breastfeed.
What if I can't breastfeed?	Talk to your midwife, health visitor or peer supporter about your concerns. There is online, telephone and face to face support available. You should have been given the contacts in hospital or by the health visitor. It can be tough but don't ever feel you have not succeeded. Any amount of breastfeeding is amazing!
Links to further information and advice:	Before Pregnancy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Choices pre conception care During and after Pregnancy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off to the Best Start Start4life • Building a Happy Baby UNICEF After Pregnancy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastfeeding checklist for you UNICEF • NHS guide to breastfeeding and alcohol • La Leche league website • Association of Breastfeeding Mothers • National Childbirth Trust