

## **The Value of Mother's Milk** **Every drop counts**

Mother's milk is not only for nutrition, it is like a special medication for infants. Providing this milk is the most helpful thing a mother can do for her infant while in the hospital and following discharge.

A mother's milk is specifically designed for her baby. Every mother is highly encouraged to provide colostrum and breast milk for as long as possible for her baby. This is something that *only she* can do for her infant. The lactation consultants and nurses will provide guidance and support in the hospital for early breast feeding (in the first 1-2 hours) or early pumping (within the first 2-6 hours following delivery) if your baby is unable to go to breast or you choose to pump and bottle feed. We recommend frequent feeds for your baby (8-10 times each day) while you are in the hospital. Our goal is to make feeding a safe and enjoyable experience for both Mom and baby.

### **Protective Benefits of Mother's Milk**

- Colostrum (early breast milk) is packed with factors that promote intestinal development and reduce the infant's infection risk. The earlier the infant is born, the higher the concentration of these components.
- Many different fats in mother's milk optimize brain growth and development in infants.
- While touching or holding her infant, a mother starts to make specific antibodies against germs in her infant's surroundings. Infants then receive these protective antibodies through their mother's milk.
- Fresh mother's milk contains thousands to millions of live cells. Among these are specialized cells for fighting infection and those that may act as an internal building and repair system.

### **Improving Outcomes with Mother's milk**

- Mother's milk enhances brain development beyond the hospital stay. Infants receiving full feedings of mother's milk generally have an increased IQ and improvement in behavioral scores when tested at the age of 18 months.
- Mother's milk reduces the risk of disease over a lifetime. This includes childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes later in life. It has been shown to improve overall brain development as well.
- Compared to formula, mother's milk reduces the risk of infection, SIDS, and many other diseases in the first year of life. It is also shown to protect and help with intestinal health and growth.

*We want to help to you to provide your baby with the lifelong benefits of an exclusive mother's milk diet while in the hospital and long after you have taken your baby home.*