Choosing how to feed your baby is one of the most important decisions you will make as a new parent.

Top health benefits of breastfeeding include:

- Breast milk is the perfect food for your baby. It has the right amount of water, sugar, fats and protein. It is easy to digest. Mother’s milk can provide complete nutrition for your baby’s growth for the first six months.
- The cells, hormones, and antibodies in breast milk protect babies from illness. This protection is unique and changes to meet your baby’s needs. Breastfed babies are less likely to have diarrhea, ear infections, respiratory tract infections, asthma, and eczema.
- Breastfed babies have a lower risk of Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis.
- Breast milk helps newborn brain development. Breastfed babies score higher on intelligence and visual tests at school age.
- Helps you feel closer and bond with your baby.
- Helps you recover from childbirth and lowers your risk of type 2 diabetes, breast and ovarian cancer.
- Mother’s milk is natural, renewable and environmentally friendly.
- Saves money ($1200 to $1500) per year.

Formula fed babies have an increased health risk of:

- Ear infections
- Diarrhea
- Asthma (a lung condition that causes problems with breathing)
- Eczema (an allergic skin condition)
- Lower respiratory tract (lung) infections that require hospital admission
- Childhood obesity
- Diabetes
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Childhood leukemia (a cancer of the blood)

Tips for Breastfeeding Success:

- Enjoy holding your baby skin to skin right after birth.
- Start breastfeeding as soon as your baby shows interest soon after birth.
- Breastfeed frequently. A newborn’s tummy is so tiny that they usually want to feed 8 or more times per 24 hours in the early weeks.
- Keep your baby with you in your room both day and night so you can learn when your baby needs to eat. Your nurse will come to your room to help you learn to position and latch-on your baby comfortably.
- Avoid pacifiers until breastfeeding is going well. Pacifier use can decrease breastfeeding frequency and delay milk supply.
- Avoid bottle nipples until breastfeeding is going well. Sucking from a bottle is quick and easy. Baby may end up preferring the bottle because he does not have to work hard.
- Avoid formula use unless medically necessary. The “supply and demand” way of milk production can be disrupted when babies receive extra feeds, and reduce milk production overall.
- Your nurse or Lactation Consultant will show you how to use a feeding and diaper log so you can be confident that your baby is drinking enough.
- Let your family know how important breastfeeding is to you. Baby can be fed your pumped milk once breastfeeding directly is going well in a few weeks.
- Breastfeeding is natural for you and your baby, but it is a skill that needs to be learned. Even if you have breastfed before, every baby is different. Ask questions about breastfeeding while you are in the hospital and get the support you need. This will help you continue to breastfeed after you go home.
- The Elliot New Moms’ Group welcomes you for additional support. Group is “drop in” and is held every Wednesday from 11AM-1PM at River’s Edge.
- Call the Elliot Lactation Consultant Warm Line if you have difficulties/questions when you go home 603-663-4464.

Reference:

- ePublications “Your Guide to Breastfeeding” and Breastfeeding Fact Sheet available at: www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding