



United States Breastfeeding
COMMITTEE
PROMOTING • SUPPORTING • PROTECTING

<p>August 1, 2007 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">CONTACT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">United States Breastfeeding Committee Chair: Audrey Naylor, MD, PhD. AJNaylor@aol.com, 619-574-8174 Vice Chair: Ruth Lawrence, MD ruth_lawrence@urmc.rochester.edu, 585-275-4354</p>
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U.S. BREASTFEEDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS EARLY AND EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING

Washington, DC. Initiation of breastfeeding within the first hour after birth provides a baby with warmth, nourishment, and protection from infection. "For the healthy baby, the first routine after delivery should be skin-to-skin contact with the mother and initiation of breastfeeding," said Dr. Audrey Naylor, chair of the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee (USBC). The Committee, a collaborative partnership of nearly 40 organizations, meets every year in August during World Breastfeeding Week. More than 120 countries are holding special events focused on early initiation of breastfeeding, the theme for this year.

One of the objectives of the USBC is to disseminate evidence-based best practices throughout the health care system. Early and exclusive breastfeeding are two of the best practices promoted by the USBC. Many hospitals now keep mothers and babies together, making it easier to practice early and exclusive breastfeeding, but certain procedures such as weighing and bathing the baby can delay initiation. "These procedures can wait," said Dr. Naylor. "We should respond to the special conditions that exist in the first hour. A healthy baby that is delivered vaginally is awake and alert and shows an inborn rooting and sucking reflex."

Babies delivered by Cesarean section can also benefit from skin-to-skin contact by being held close to the mother's cheek right after delivery. With the support of health providers, many of them can start to breastfeed within the first two hours after surgery.

The U.S. Breastfeeding Committee urges hospitals to support early and exclusive breastfeeding by eliminating disruptive practices, keeping records of initiation rates in the first hour, reducing the number of medically unnecessary C-sections, and meeting criteria established by the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative. The Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative is a global program sponsored by the World Health Organization and UNICEF to assist hospitals in giving breastfeeding mothers the information, confidence, and skills needed to successfully initiate and continue breastfeeding. Only 3.3 percent of live births in the United States take place in a facility that was awarded baby-friendly status following an intensive two to three day on-site assessment by an external review board.

For more information on the USBC, visit www.usbreastfeeding.org.

The USBC is an organization of organizations. Opinions expressed by the USBC are not necessarily the position of all member organizations and opinions expressed by USBC representatives are not necessarily the position of the USBC.

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