



TEN STEP TUESDAY

# The Wonders of Colostrum

## It's Ten Step Tuesday!



Colostrum is the first milk that a mother produces in the weeks before delivery and in the early days of breastfeeding. This special milk is low in fat, and high in carbohydrates, protein, and antibodies and is extremely easy to digest. Although the volume of colostrum is low, it is high in concentrated nutrition. It is the perfect first food for newborns.

**When mothers worry that they “have no milk” remind them that a little colostrum goes a long way, and putting the baby to breast often helps colostrum transition to mature milk sooner.**

- Colostrum has a laxative effect on the baby, helping him pass meconium which aids in the excretion of excess bilirubin and helps prevent jaundice.
- Colostrum is often called “white blood” because it provides large amounts of living cells (lymphocytes and macrophages, similar to those in blood) which will defend the baby against bacteria and viruses. More than a million white blood cells are present in just one drop of colostrum!
- Colostrum has an especially important role in protecting the baby’s gastrointestinal tract. A newborn’s intestines are very permeable. Colostrum seals the holes by “painting” the gastrointestinal tract with a barrier which prevents most foreign proteins (from food the mother has eaten or from formula) from penetrating the gut and possibly sensitizing a baby to a food allergy.
- Colostrum is considered the baby’s first immunization because it contains large quantities of the antibody secretory IgA.

As breastmilk changes from colostrum to mature milk, the concentration of immune factors and antibodies decreases, but the volume of breastmilk greatly increases. Therefore, the “dose” of immunological protection the baby receives remains fairly constant throughout breastfeeding.

For more information contact

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