

Breastfeeding Mother's Bill of Rights

With a new infant on the way, you have important decisions to make. Decisions that will have an impact for years to come. One of the biggest decisions will be how you are going to feed your baby. According to doctors, breastfeeding is the safest and healthiest choice for most women and infants. But choosing to breastfeed is **your** choice, and you deserve to be aware of your rights.

Before Delivery

It is your right as a mother to request complete information from your healthcare facility on breastfeeding including:

- The nutritional, medical, and emotional benefits of breastfeeding for you and your baby.
- How to prepare yourself to breastfeed.
- Potential problems breastfeeding can present and how you can solve those problems.

At the Healthcare Facility

Other than a medical emergency, these rights should never be ignored or overlooked.

- Your baby should ALWAYS be allowed to stay with you immediately following birth, and you may begin breastfeeding even within an hour of delivery.
- Your baby can stay with you 24 hours a day and breastfeed at any time.
- Your healthcare facility should provide a trained professional for help and information.
- You may demand that your baby not receive pacifiers, formula, or any bottle feeding.
- You should be made aware of and allowed to refuse drugs that may affect your milk.
- Even if your baby requires extended hospitalization or has special needs, the hospital must make every attempt to help you continue your breastfeeding efforts and provide your baby with pumped breast milk.
- You can continue breastfeeding, even if your baby is in the neo-natal unit.

After Your Healthcare Facility Stay

After leaving your healthcare facility, your rights to breastfeed and to receive helpful information about breastfeeding should not be overlooked.

- You may refuse any discharge packs containing infant formula.
- You may request more information about breastfeeding consultants, support groups, and breast pumps in your community.
- You should receive information about safely collecting and storing your breast milk.
- If you require a second stay in a healthcare facility after your first delivery stay, you have the right to continue your breastfeeding efforts with the hospital's full support.
- You are in NO WAY violating public indecency laws should you choose to breastfeed your baby in any location that you are allowed to be in the State of South Dakota.

No matter who you are, where you're from, or what you believe, your healthcare facility should make this information clear to you from the beginning and should work with you to answer your questions and concerns. It is your right as a mother to be as prepared as possible, especially when it concerns your child's health and safety.



South Dakota Department
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