

## 1. Intensive skin contact

Imprinting the newborn - Keep your baby in unrestricted skin contact. After birth, enjoy feeling your newborn on your skin. Only if there are acute health problems, should this skin-to-skin contact be interrupted. To ensure this initial bonding, a joint transfer to a central hospital is preferable to separation. Before any possible separation, insist on an extra-long period of being together.

Although we know that skin contact is crucial for bonding, the starting conditions are not always ideal. Try to make up for the missed skin contact as soon as possible.

## 2. Let the newborn seek the breast- initial experience without special devices

In the delivery room, your baby with a cleft lip and palate may be placed on the breast. Perhaps he only wants to lick it or lay his head on your body. As with any other newborn, he has a pronounced need to suck immediately after birth. The fear that he could aspirate mother's milk is completely unfounded, since he can swallow the small amount of colostrum very competently.

## 3. Start hand expression (colostrum massage) and give mother's milk immediately

With hand expression (colostrum massage), the calories are immediately available. You can massage out the colostrum directly into the baby's mouth or give it to him on his tongue with a spoon, a syringe or a pipette. The concentrated immunoglobulins in the colostrum are the perfect nutritional start for every newborn.

Some expectant mothers already collect some colostrum by hand at the end of pregnancy (37<sup>th</sup> week) and freeze it in a small syringe to bring with them to the birth.

## 4. Breastfeeding with special devices, with or without a plate

Breastfeeding with special devices is possible, with or without a palatal plate. Do not wait, but start using a device **IMMEDIATELY**. This is also called **assisted breastfeeding**. This successful experience is important for you and your newborn! Ask the midwife, the lactation consultant or nurse to help you with instructions. Try out various things until you find the right device.

The volume of milk taken from the breast is unimportant. Your baby just gets the amount of massaged or pumped out mother's milk to which he is entitled. Avoid test weighing. Disappointments are inevitable with this!

## 5. Obtaining the milk

Because babies with a cleft palate cannot create a vacuum when breastfeeding, the amount of milk slowly declines. Therefore, regular electric pumping is absolutely necessary, despite efforts to breastfeed.

If you build up the milk production with an electric double pumping system, you can, at a later date, freely decide about the further type of feeding for your baby. Perhaps the milk just simply bubbles up...perhaps only a few drops of milk flow due to your concern about your baby, but every drop is precious...