



LONDON BOROUGH OF
MERTON



INFANT FEEDING SUPPORT



BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING

Breastfeeding has long-term benefits for the baby, lasting right into adulthood.

Any amount of breast milk has a positive effect. The longer the baby is breastfed, the longer the protection lasts and the greater the benefits.

Breastmilk is tailor-made for a baby. It boosts a baby's ability to fight illness and infection - babies who are not breastfed are more likely to get diarrhoea and chest infections.

Giving nothing but breast milk is recommended for about the first 6 months (26 weeks) of a baby's life and alongside solid foods thereafter.

A mother keeping their baby close will help them to respond to their need for food, love and comfort. Breastfeeding is about more than just food.



BREASTFEEDING BENEFITS FOR THE BABY

It reduces the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

Breastfeeding reduces the risk of SIDS.

Fewer allergies

Breastfeeding lowers the risk of allergies and eczema.

Less diarrhea and constipation

Breastmilk is easier for your baby to digest and has protective factors reducing the risk of diarrhoea and constipation.

Fewer infections and illnesses...

Breastmilk contains antibodies against illnesses and respiratory infections (like chest infections), gastrointestinal infections (like rotavirus) and ear infections.

...and fewer diseases

Less risk of chronic diseases like coeliac, IBS and Crohn's.

Fewer hospital and GP visits

Breastfed babies have fewer trips to the hospital/GP meaning less time off nursery

Brain development

Research shows breastfeeding and the components of breastmilk increase brain and cognitive development.

Reduces obesity and diabetes

Breastfed babies are 25% less likely to be obese later in life and less likely to develop type 1 or 2 diabetes.

Better eyesight and fewer dental problems

Breastmilk has components that support vision. Breastfed babies have fewer cavities and dental malocclusion.

Protective against cancer

Breastfeeding reduces the risk of childhood cancers.

BREASTFEEDING BENEFITS FOR THE MUM

Convenient

Breastmilk is quick, clean and always the right temperature.

Helps to bond with the baby

Skin-to-skin and close contact helps bond with the baby.

It's better for the heart

Breastfeeding lowers the risk of hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

Reduces risk of disease and diabetes

Research shows breastfeeding lowers the risk of type 2 diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis, and multiple sclerosis.

Reduces risk of cancer

Research shows breastfeeding lowers the risk of ovarian, endometrial, thyroid and breast cancers.

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MERTON BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

Name and venue	Day and time	Booking information
Acacia - Breastfeeding Drop in Support Group Acacia Childrens Centre, Grove Rd, CR4 1SD	Mondays 10.30am – 12pm	No need to book, just drop in! Come along for a chat, breastfeeding support & to meet other mums. NB: closed during some school breaks. Please call to confirm/check Instagram for up-to-date timetables @merton_bf_nhs. Prompt finish at listed end times
Lower Morden - Breastfeeding Drop in Support Group Lower Morden Childrens Centre, Aragon Primary School, Aragon Road SM4 4QU	Thursdays 12.30pm—2pm	
Church Rd - Merton Health Visiting Breastfeeding Support Church Road Children’s Centre, 243 Church Rd, CR4 3LS	Wednesdays 1pm—4pm	Booked appointments only – can self-refer. Booked via your Health Visitor or by calling the duty Health Visiting line: 03300539264
Merton Health Visiting Specialist Breastfeeding Clinic	Mondays	Referrals from Health Care Professionals after first line support received



MERTON_BF_NHS



BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

St Georges Breastfeeding support

Tooting Health Centre, Mondays (09:30 – 13:00) and Tuesdays (09:30 – 17:00)

Stormont Health centre, Thursdays (09:30 – 17:00)

Free service to those who have delivered at St Georges

St. George's Infant Feeding Team: infant.feeding@stgeorges.nhs.uk / 07766800365



La Leche League Merton

One Wednesday per month (13.45 - 15.00)

Book to attend: laleche.bernie@gmail.com / 07523687686



St Helier Midwifery Virtual Breastfeeding Clinic

Tuesdays & Thursdays (09:00 – 13:00)

Free service to those who have delivered at St Helier or who are under the St Helier community midwifery team

Link to access these clinics: [St Helier Midwifery Virtual Breastfeeding Clinic](#)



ANTENATAL CLASSES

Antenatal classes help parents prepare for their baby's birth along with giving them confidence and information. Parents will learn how to look after and feed their baby, stay healthy during pregnancy and make a birth plan - considering the different arrangements for labour and birth and the choices available.

Antenatal classes are also a good way for parents to meet other expecting parents. These friendships can become part of the support network during the first few months after birth.

Most antenatal classes start around 8 to 10 weeks before the baby is due, around 30 to 32 weeks pregnant.

St Georges, Epsom and St. Helier, Croydon and Kingston Hospitals all provide antenatal information and sessions for parents.

Parents can also search for private and local antenatal classes through the [NHS website](#)



RESOURCES

The Breastfeeding Network provides a useful guide on expressing and storing breastmilk. This includes safe storage of fresh breastmilk, freezing and thawing.

[Expressing and Storing Breastmilk](#)

Safe Storage of Breastmilk



Milk	Place	Maximum Time
Fresh Breastmilk including colostrum	Room Temperature	6 hours
	Fridge at 5°C-10°C	3 days
	Fridge at 4°C or lower	5 days <small>If temperature rises above 4°C after 3 days then use within 6 hours</small>
Frozen Breastmilk	Freezer at -18°C or lower	6 Months
Defrosting Breastmilk	When defrosting in the fridge	Usually takes 12 hours to defrost, use as soon as fully defrosted
	When defrosting outside the fridge	Use as soon as fully defrosted

RESOURCES

The Global Health Media Project provides engaging, crystal clear, short, and practical videos, enabling learners of all levels to easily understand, and remember critical teaching points.

Videos include attaching your baby at the breast, positions for breastfeeding, increasing milk supply and storing breastmilk safely.

Videos are also available in multiple additional languages.

[Global Health Media Project](#)



Attaching Your Baby at the Breast

English | Mothers and caregivers

MERTON INFANT FEEDING WEBSITE

This website provides information on:

Videos on
breastfeeding

Breastfeeding
Support in Merton

Childrens centres, baby
massage and Family
Information and Support
Hubs (FISH) sessions

Breastfeeding
in public



Booking Introduction
to solids workshops

Responsive bottle feeding
and safe formula
preparation

Hand expressing

Overcoming
breastfeeding problems

Contacting the
Merton team

Sleep & caring for your
baby at night



FURTHER SUPPORT



[Start for Life](#)

Better Health helps parents give their infants the best start in life. Information and advice is provided about healthy eating during pregnancy, breastfeeding, weaning, meal recipes, and activities as well as other useful advice. Better Health also promotes 'Breastfeeding Friend' which is a digital tool which offers practical information and advice on breastfeeding. Women can get answers to questions asked by new mums, and tips on things like sore nipples and what to do if their baby cries during feeds. The Breastfeeding Friend is available on Amazon Alexa and Facebook Messenger 24/7.



[Benefits of breastfeeding](#)

The NHS website provides useful information on the benefits of breastfeeding. Some of the benefits include providing all nutrition baby need, reducing the baby's risk of infections and lower the mothers risk of breast cancer.



[Breastfeeding Support Services](#)

The NHS website provides information on breastfeeding support services and allows people to search for their local support services. Breastfeeding support services enable parents to discuss any worries or concerns they may have while breastfeeding.



FURTHER SUPPORT



Merton Health
visiting

If parents have concerns about themselves or their baby/child, they can contact the Merton 0-19 Integrated Single Point of Access (SPA) and speak to a health professional who will be available to offer help and support. 0330 053 9264 (Monday - Friday, 9am to 5pm)



National
Breastfeeding
Helpline

The National Breastfeeding Helpline offers friendly, non-judgemental, independent, evidence-based breastfeeding support and information to anyone in the UK who needs it. The helpline is open 365 days a year from 9.30 am to 9.30 pm. Support is also available in Welsh, Polish, Bengali & Sylheti and for people who have hearing or speech impairments. 0300 100 0212



NCT

National Childbirth Trust (NCT) provides information and advice to all parents to support them to feel confident, connected and safe. NCT offers lots of helpful information on infant feeding along with online courses and workshops. NCT also has a helpline which provides practical and emotional support with infant feeding and general enquires. 0300 330 0700



ABM

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers (ABM) are a group of trained volunteers dedicated to supporting breastfeeding mums and their families. They offer breastfeeding support to anyone who has a question or a concern. 0300 330 5453 (Everyday, 9.30am -10.30pm) / counselling@abm.me.uk



FURTHER SUPPORT



[Breastfeeding Network](#)



[La Leche League GB](#)



The Breastfeeding Network provides Independent breastfeeding support and information. It Informs, educates and supports families in feeding and nurturing babies and young children as well as promoting the mental and physical wellbeing of mothers and babies through supporting breastfeeding. Information also includes a factsheet on drugs and breastfeeding.

LaLeche League GB provides information and breastfeeding support from pregnancy onwards. Parents can contact La Leche League GB helpline for support - 0345 120 2918 (8am to 11pm, 365 days a year) and Café La Leche Merton is a breastfeeding support group for pregnant mums, breastfeeding mothers, babies, and toddlers.

Early Start is on a mission to promote positive attitudes and enjoyment of nutritious food throughout childhood. Early Start provides resources for families including webinars, online parent courses and blogs on nutrition to support healthy eating. This includes eating well during pregnancy, feeding babies in the first year, good nutrition for toddlers and fussy eating strategies.



[Twins Trust](#)

Twins Trust provides support to parents with twins, triplets and more. There is lots of useful information and advice including infant feeding and breastfeeding. Twins Trust also offer an online breastfeeding course for a small fee and an online feeding drop in's which takes place every Monday 10-11:30am.



FURTHER SUPPORT

Bliss

[Bliss](http://bliss.org.uk)



[UKAMB](http://ukamb.org)

Bliss offers a wide range of free services for the families of premature and sick babies including a video call support service. Parents can have a 30-minute video call with a trained volunteer who understands neonatal care and has experience in supporting families. hello@bliss.org.uk

UK Association of milk banking (UKAMB) has information about using donated breastmilk for babies that are premature or ill, and how to donate breast milk. info@ukamb.org



[The Baby
Friendly Initiative](http://www.babyfriendly.org.uk)

The Unicef UK Baby Friendly initiative enables public services to better support families with feeding and developing close and loving relationships so that all babies get the best possible start in life. It provides useful information and advice on breastfeeding including research statistics. Unicef UK has also made a short video around promoting & supporting breastfeeding in the UK. [Baby Friendly Initiative | Call to Action \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

**HOME
START**

[Merton
Home-Start
Merton](http://www.homestartmerton.org)

Home-Start Merton enables families experiencing stress or difficulties to meet the needs of their children from conception to five years old. Home-start Merton offers one-to-one practical support, group sessions and counselling support. Professional and self-referrals accepted. 0208 646 6044 / admin@homestartmerton.org



FURTHER SUPPORT



[Healthy Start](#)

The NHS Healthy Start scheme provides eligible parents help to buy food and milk. Eligible parents who are more than 10 weeks pregnant or with a child under 4, can apply and be sent a Health Start card with money on it that can be used in some UK shops. The card will be topped up every 4 weeks. The card can be used to buy plain liquid cow's milk, fresh, frozen, and tinned fruit and vegetables, fresh, dried, and tinned pulses and infant formula milk based on cow's milk. The card can also be used to collect Healthy Start vitamins and vitamin drops for babies and young children. 0300 330 7010 / healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk



[Paediatric Dietetics](#)

Merton Children's Paediatric Dietetics service works with children from birth up to 19 years of age who require specialist input to meet their nutritional requirements. The Dietitians assess and treat each child's diet and nutrition problems and provide help to children, young people and their families to make appropriate lifestyle and food choices. Children's Dietitians work with children and young people with a range of nutritional needs, feeding difficulties and also where physical or learning disabilities impact their ability to eat. Dietetics is a targeted and specialist service so a medical referral into the service is required.

03300539264 / CLCHT.MertonICNTeam@nhs.net



MERTON LOCAL DIRECTORIES

Merton Local Directories are great resources to keep up to date with activities and services available for children, young people and adults in Merton.

[Merton Local Directories](#)

Welcome to Merton Local Directories

Support, services, advice and things to do



Family Services Directory

Support and information for expectant parents and families with children and young people aged 0-19.

[Activities and leisure](#)
[Childcare and education](#)
[Community groups and places](#)
[Family support and parenting](#)
[Health and wellbeing](#)
[Information, advice and support](#)

See more



SEND Local Offer

Support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged 0-25.

[Activities and leisure](#)
[Education and childcare](#)
[Employment and training](#)
[Health](#)
[Preparing for adulthood](#)
[Social care](#)

See more



Young Merton

Support for care leavers moving into adulthood and independent living aged 16-25.

[Education and learning](#)
[Have a say. Get involved](#)
[Keeping safe and healthy](#)
[Local offer for care leavers](#)
[Things to do](#)
[Work, money and living](#)

See more



Adult Support Services Directory

Support for adults on employment, education, health, housing, financial advice and things to do in the community.

[Activities and leisure](#)
[Health and wellbeing](#)
[Housing matters](#)
[How to access help](#)
[Keeping safe](#)
[Money matters](#)

See more



Family Hubs Directory

Connecting families and young people with access to help, when and where they need it.

[Family Voice](#)
[Home life, finances and staying safe](#)
[Keeping your family healthy](#)
[Play, youth and family learning](#)
[SEND support \(Special educational needs and disabilities\)](#)
[Start for Life](#)

See more



FURTHER SUPPORT

Parents can receive further information and advice on infant feeding through the Family Information Support Hubs (FISH).

FISH provides parents/carers with information, support and guidance on all aspects of family life.

FISH sessions take place Monday – Friday with FREE face-to-face or telephone appointments available. Appointments can be booked via [Eventbrite](#) either by a parent/carer or a practitioner on their behalf.

Or parents/carers can come along to one of the FISH drop-in sessions (no appointment needed):

Family Hub at Church Rd Children Centre – Mondays, 1.30pm-4.30pm
Family Hub at Acacia Children Centre – Wednesdays, 9.00am-12.00pm

