WHY IT'S IMPORTANT
For mothers who are able, breastfeeding is best. In addition to providing needed nutrition to your child, it also helps build immunity, preparing their bodies to fight infection. It also has benefits for you, like losing weight and a special bond that comes with feeding your child so closely.

WHAT YOU CAN DO
• Breastfeeding is natural, but that does not mean it is always easy. Learn how to hold and support your baby in a comfortable position while breastfeeding.
• Ask for help. Before your baby is born, ask your medical provider or hospital about classes and express interest in breastfeeding. There are people, called lactation consultants, who are specially trained to help teach breastfeeding. Lactation consultants and nurses can also help with your first feedings and help you find the best way to hold your baby and ensure your baby is able to latch and get the milk.
• Don't give up. Some mothers find it very frustrating to figure it all out. If you are having trouble, ask your medical provider, lactation consultant or health department for support before deciding to stop. They have a lot of advice and can help you.
• Plan ahead. Things change when you go home from the hospital and when you go back to work. Talk to your family, other mothers and your employer about how they can support you as you care for your baby.

GETTING HELP
• Call your medical provider or health department. They have people who can answer questions and help you if you are having trouble with breastfeeding.
• If you need support at work, the Office on Women's Health has the Business Case for Breastfeeding, a program to educate employers about the value of supporting breastfeeding employees in the workplace. You can find information on their website: www.womenshealth.gov.
• La Leche League International can also give you information and maybe even help in person. You can check online at www.llli.org to see if there is a La Leche chapter in your community.
• The Office on Women's Health also has tips about breastfeeding from other moms at www.womenshealth.gov/ItsOnlyNatural.