

# Interventions and advice about breastfeeding for women who may become pregnant, or who are pregnant or breastfeeding

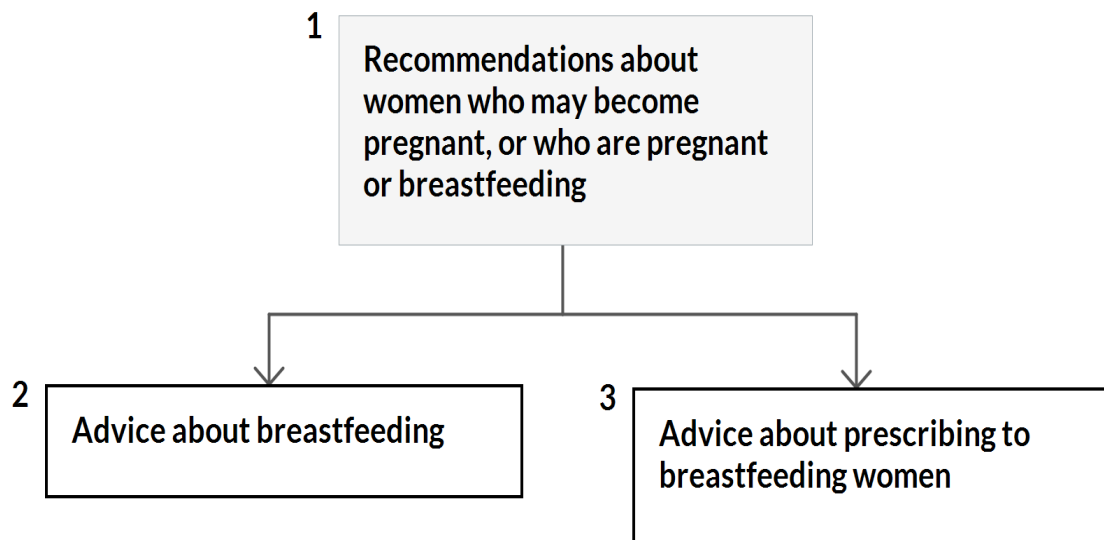
NICE Pathways bring together everything NICE says on a topic in an interactive flowchart. NICE Pathways are interactive and designed to be used online.

They are updated regularly as new NICE guidance is published. To view the latest version of this NICE Pathway see:

<http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/maternal-and-child-nutrition>

NICE Pathway last updated: 04 November 2020

This document contains a single flowchart and uses numbering to link the boxes to the associated recommendations.



## 1 Recommendations about women who may become pregnant, or who are pregnant or breastfeeding

No additional information

## 2 Advice about breastfeeding

### Advice for pregnant women

Midwives and health visitors should ensure pregnant women and their partners are offered breastfeeding information, education and support on an individual or group basis. This should be provided by someone trained in breastfeeding management and should be delivered in a setting and style that best meets the woman's needs.

During individual antenatal consultations GPs, obstetricians and midwives should encourage breastfeeding. They should pay particular attention to the needs of women who are least likely to breastfeed (for example, young women, those who have low educational achievement and those from disadvantaged groups).

A midwife or health visitor trained in breastfeeding management should provide an informal group session in the last trimester of pregnancy. This should focus on how to breastfeed effectively by covering feeding position and how to attach the baby correctly.

### Advice for breastfeeding women

Ensure a mother can demonstrate how to position and attach the baby to the breast and can identify signs that the baby is feeding well. This should be achieved (and be documented) before she leaves hospital or the birth centre (or before the midwife leaves the mother after a home birth).

Provide continuing and proactive breastfeeding support at home, recording all advice in the mother's hand-held records.

Provide contact details for local voluntary organisations that can offer ongoing support to complement NHS breastfeeding services.

Advise mothers that a healthy diet is important for everyone and that they do not need to modify

their diet to breastfeed.

Do not provide written materials in isolation but use them to reinforce face-to-face advice about breastfeeding.

Show all breastfeeding mothers how to hand-express breast milk.

Advise mothers that expressed milk can be stored for:

- up to 5 days in the main part of a fridge, at 4°C or lower
- up to 2 weeks in the freezer compartment of a fridge
- up to 6 months in a domestic freezer, at minus 18°C or lower.

Advise mothers who wish to store expressed breast milk for less than 5 days that the fridge preserves its properties more effectively than freezing.

Advise mothers who freeze their expressed breast milk to defrost it in the fridge and not to re-freeze it once thawed. Advise them never to use a microwave oven to warm or defrost breast milk.

For more information about breastfeeding see what NICE says on [postnatal care](#).

### 3 Advice about prescribing to breastfeeding women

Ensure health professionals and pharmacists who prescribe or dispense drugs to a breastfeeding mother consult supplementary sources (for example, the [Drugs and Lactation Database \[LactMed\]](#) ) or seek guidance from the [UK Drugs in Lactation Advisory Service](#).

Health professionals should discuss the benefits and risks associated with the prescribed medication and encourage the mother to continue breastfeeding, if reasonable to do so. In most cases, it should be possible to identify a suitable medication which is safe to take during breastfeeding by analysing pharmacokinetic and study data. Appendix 5 of the 'British national formulary' should only be used as a guide as it does not contain quantitative data on which to base individual decisions.

Health professionals should recognise that there may be adverse health consequences for both mother and baby if the mother does not breastfeed. They should also recognise that it may not be easy for the mother to stop breastfeeding abruptly – and that it is difficult to reverse.

For information about prescribing to women with mental health disorders who are breastfeeding, see what NICE says on [antenatal and postnatal mental health](#).

## Glossary

### Diet

in this interactive flowchart, the term 'diet' refers to the habitual eating patterns of individuals and groups of people who are not slimming or eating to manage or treat a medical condition

### Sources

Maternal and child nutrition (2008 updated 2014) NICE guideline PH11

## Your responsibility

### Guidelines

The recommendations in this guideline represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, professionals and practitioners are expected to take this guideline fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients or the people using their service. It is not mandatory to apply the recommendations, and the guideline does not override the responsibility to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual, in consultation with them and their families and carers or guardian.

Local commissioners and providers of healthcare have a responsibility to enable the guideline to be applied when individual professionals and people using services wish to use it. They should do so in the context of local and national priorities for funding and developing services, and in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities. Nothing in this guideline should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with complying with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

## Technology appraisals

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, health professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients. The application of the recommendations in this interactive flowchart is at the discretion of health professionals and their individual patients and do not override the responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or their carer or guardian.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to provide the funding required to enable the recommendations to be applied when individual health professionals and their patients wish to use it, in accordance with the NHS Constitution. They should do so in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

## Medical technologies guidance, diagnostics guidance and interventional procedures guidance

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, healthcare professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account. However, the interactive flowchart does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to implement the recommendations, in their local context, in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. Nothing in this interactive flowchart should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.