



**A**fter your baby is born, you will be moved to a postpartum room where you will stay until you leave the hospital. There, you will find a flexible and relaxed environment where you can recuperate, get to know your baby, and receive personalized care. Most women stay in the hospital two nights after a vaginal birth and four nights after a cesarean. We encourage you to keep your baby in your room as much as possible while you are in the hospital. We call this “rooming-in.” There are many health benefits to rooming-in for both mother and baby when they stay together throughout their hospitalization. This helps you get to know one another more quickly and is also important in the establishment of breastfeeding.

## Safety for you and your baby

Safety practices and policies are in place to protect you and your baby. A list of these will be available to you on the postpartum unit. Please review them now so that you will know what to expect.

☞ If a staff member is taking your baby out of your room, he or she must have a hospital ID badge with a blue background. If the person does not have a Beth Israel Deaconess ID badge with a blue band behind the name, do not allow the person to take your baby.

☞ If your baby has been away from you, the staff will check the baby’s ID bands with you before you and your baby are reunited.

☞ Security doors protect the entrance to the postpartum unit. Your family and friends must ring a bell to enter and exit the unit. Once inside, they must sign in at the desk and receive a visitor’s pass.

☞ Please do not leave your baby alone in the room.

☞ If you are showering, bring the crib to the bathroom or near the door, and position it so that you can watch the baby.

☞ For security and to prevent accidents, we do not allow anyone to carry a baby in the hallway. This includes the parents and other family members. If you are taking your baby down the hall, please wheel him or her in the crib.

☞ Please do not take your baby off the unit until it is time for you to go home.

☞ Never leave the baby alone on the bed.

☞ If you are adjusting your bed, please make sure the baby’s crib isn’t too close to the bed. The crib can get caught in the bed as it moves, which could cause the baby to fall.

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☺ It's important for babies to be held and cuddled a lot in the first weeks and months of life. We encourage you to hold your baby often, especially skin-to-skin. Please do not hold the baby in your bed if you are feeling tired or sick. Your baby could fall or be injured. Ask your nurse for help in these situations. Always place your baby back in the crib if you are going to sleep.

☺ Always place your baby on his or her back to sleep. This has been shown to reduce the chance of sudden infant death syndrome, or SIDS.

☺ At BIDMC, we are always working to promote patient safety. We believe that communication between patients and staff is an important part of this effort. Please be sure to ask questions about anything you don't understand. If something doesn't seem right, or if you are concerned about your care or that of your baby, please speak up. It is always okay to ask a question, or to ask the same question more than once. Ask any questions you have about medications, routine care practices, or the identity and role of anyone who enters your room.

☺ If English is not your preferred language, or if you are Deaf or hard of hearing and use American Sign Language or a certified

Deaf interpreter, please ask for an interpreter when you are having important conversations with the staff or when you or your baby are having medical tests. Help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week either in person or by phone for almost all language needs.

☺ You will be given important information about the dangers of "shaking" your baby, which can cause brain damage or death. A brochure about Shaken Baby Syndrome that offers infant soothing techniques will be included in the materials you receive after your baby is born. Please be sure to ask for this information if you don't find it in the materials you receive.

## **Preventing infection**

Hand hygiene is the best way to prevent the spread of germs in the hospital as well as at home. We encourage you to always clean your hands before and after caring for your baby. Tell everyone who cares for your baby about the importance of cleaning their hands. Gently remind all friends, neighbors, and family members to clean their hands when entering and leaving your room, and before holding, changing, or otherwise caring for your baby.

## Visitors

At BIDMC, your visitors are welcome.

We try to strike a balance between helping family and friends give a warm welcome to a newborn, and making sure mothers get the rest they need after giving birth. We encourage you to rest when your baby is resting. We also want to be sure mothers and babies have time together to get to know each other and learn to breastfeed.

The baby's other parent is welcome any time, and siblings are also encouraged to visit whenever they can, according to the wishes of the mother and her partner. (Please make sure small children who will be visiting don't have contagious illnesses.) Relatives and friends may visit at the discretion of the mother.

All visitors in obstetrics must obtain a visitor's badge at the nurses' station. The badge must be visible at all times and must be changed every 24 hours. The only people who can transport the baby to and from the nursery are the mother and a second person the mother designates at the time of delivery.

## Learning to care for your newborn

From the start, you are strongly encouraged to participate in your baby's care. Research has shown that this early contact greatly increases the confidence new parents have when they leave the hospital.

Your postpartum time in the hospital is short. We will do everything we can to guide and support you as you learn to care for your newborn. Your nurse will talk with you about holding, bathing, and feeding your baby. In addition, please be sure to check out the Newborn Channel on the TV in your room. This is provided free of charge to all patients. The Newborn Channel is available in both English and Spanish. It is also accessible online at [www.thenewbornchannelnow.com](http://www.thenewbornchannelnow.com). Just ask your nurse for the password when you are in the hospital.

You will also receive a folder that is full of information that will help you as you learn to care for your baby. Be sure to read this information and to take this packet with you when you leave.

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## **“Rooming-in” with your baby**

We want to make sure things go smoothly both in the hospital and at home. One way we do this is by encouraging you to keep your baby in your room with you. This is called “rooming-in.” There are many benefits of rooming-in for both mother and baby.

### **What is rooming-in?**

Rooming-in means that you and your baby are together most of the time while you are in the hospital. That is, your baby is with you during the day and sleeps in a crib beside your bed at night. Rooming-in is a good way for you and your baby to bond in the early days of your baby's life and to get used to the routines you will use at home. If you choose to room-in with your baby, you may still bring the baby to the nursery if you need a rest, or if you can't watch your baby because of a medical test or other reason.

If you choose not to room-in and to use the nursery more frequently, staff at the medical center will respect your choice and support you in the care of your baby.

### **What are the benefits of rooming-in?**

- Babies cry less, which helps them learn sleep patterns
- Better bonding between baby and family
- Helps create harmony between mother and baby
- Babies sleep better
- Parents sleep better
- Parents get to know the baby's sleep cycles
- Parents learn to recognize when the baby is hungry
- Mother's milk comes in sooner
- Increases frequency of breastfeeding
- Encourages breastfeeding on demand
- Leads to a longer duration of successful breastfeeding
- Decrease in postpartum depression

## **Breastfeeding support**

Our staff is eager to make sure you have a good start breastfeeding your baby. The best time to begin is right in the delivery room, within an hour of the baby's birth if possible. Holding your baby skin-to-skin right after birth will keep him/her warm. During the first hour after birth, your baby will be alert and most interested in breastfeeding. We know that skin-to-skin contact is key to mother-baby bonding for bottle-fed babies as well.

Nurses on the postpartum unit have special expertise in helping mothers and babies breastfeed, and are available 24 hours a day to help you and your baby learn this important new skill. Written information may be found in your OB discharge folder.

Breastfeeding is a learning process for both you and your baby. If you and your baby need additional help with breastfeeding, your nurse will ask one of the lactation consultants to visit you before you leave the hospital. The consultants are available daily while you are in the hospital.