

THE ADVANTAGES OF MOTHER-BABY NURSING FOR YOUR FAMILY

In mother-baby nursing, one nurse cares for mother and baby together. This might sound simple and logical, but many hospitals do not have mother-baby nursing. Instead they have “mother nurses” who take care of women after they’ve had a baby and “baby nurses” who take care of newborns—usually in a nursery. While having different nurses for mother and baby may sound like specialized care, it can actually be an exercise in confusion, missed opportunities, and inflexibility. You see, when more than one nurse is involved in caregiving, signals can get crossed. Messages can get lost or confused.

Mother-baby nurses care for both mother and baby, and they nurture bonding and attachment in the new family. In fact, with mother-baby nursing, the nurse cares for the whole family. Dad and other family members are included—whomever the new mother calls “family.” The daily schedule is adjusted to family needs. Each morning the mother-baby nurse helps the new mother plan her day. Care is flexible for each family according to their needs—not according to some rigid hospital schedule.

There are many benefits for the family with mother-baby nursing:

- Mother’s and baby’s doctors work with the same nurse rather than with two separate nurses. At shift change the needs and wants of each mother-baby couplet are easily passed on to the next nurse.
- Questions are answered more quickly. In most hospitals, if a mother has a question about her baby and she asks them of the postpartum nurse, she’s likely to hear, “I don’t know. You’ll have to ask the nursery nurse.” Or perhaps the mother’s nurse will go to the nursery nurse and find out the answer. With mother-baby nursing, one nurse doesn’t have to ask another nurse. One nurse knows the answer and can tell the mother right away. She knows because she is taking care of both mother and baby.
- Families have a closer relationship with the nurse. Because there are fewer nurses to relate to, the mother and nurse are more likely to develop a feeling of trust, caring, and comfort.
- Families receive more education. The mother-baby nurse demonstrates baby care as she takes care of the infant at the mother’s bedside.
- Mothers don’t miss special moments with their baby. When the baby spends most of its time in the nursery, mothers miss lots of gurgles and coos. With mother-baby nursing, most infant care takes place in the mother’s room so the mother can share those special moments.
- Families know their baby is receiving good care. Because the nurse cares for the baby in the mother’s room, families see the care their babies receive. No one has to wonder whether their baby is the one they hear crying in the nursery.
- There is increased security. Nobody likes to think about it, but mother-baby nursing increases security. There are fewer opportunities for someone to kidnap a baby, as infants are not constantly traveling between the mother’s room and the nursery. Having a mother-baby nurse reduces the number of people caring for a family and makes the appearance of strangers more obvious.

Mother-baby nursing makes sense for new families. Parents have greater involvement with their baby’s care, their bonding and attachment with their new born are strengthened, and they leave the hospital more confident in their parenting skills.