

Breastfeeding Tips for Moms:

Most people know that breastfeeding is “good” for babies yet many mothers still decide not to breastfeed. Why? Some women think that breastfeeding only works if you’re rich and famous, or that you have to eat a perfect diet, that only certain women can make enough milk for their babies, or that you can’t keep breastfeeding if you have to go back to work. None of these myths are true. Some women also think that mom’s milk is like formula with a few “bonus” vitamins added in.

The truth is that milk from mom cannot be duplicated in a can. It contains hundreds of ingredients that protect your baby from illness and infection. If you decide not to breastfeed, it does affect the health of your baby and you.

Did you know that babies who are not breastfed have:

- More infections (like meningitis, urinary tract and ear infections)
- More diarrhea and stomach problems
- More respiratory lung infections and asthma
- Higher risk of diabetes (both type 1 and 2)
- Higher risk of some childhood cancers
- Higher risk of being overweight or obese

Did you know that mothers who have not breastfed a baby have:

- More bleeding after the baby is born
- Slower weight loss after pregnancy
- Higher risk of breast cancer and ovarian cancer
- Higher risk of osteoporosis (weaker bones later in life)

If you’re not sure if breastfeeding will work for you, think about the following common concerns:

Lack of Confidence:

Many women worry that their breasts will not work. Your body is growing a baby and when the time is right your body will know how to produce milk for your baby. Breast size has no relation to the amount of milk the body makes. People who know about breastfeeding will be available after the birth of your baby to help you get breastfeeding off to a good start. Ask for help!

Tips for getting breastfeeding off to a good start:

- Breastfeed as soon as possible after your baby is born – within the first hour of life.
- Keep baby in the room with you. This will help you learn to recognize when your baby is hungry.
- Listen for your baby’s swallows to know your baby is getting your milk.
- Feed baby whenever he/she seems hungry. Your baby will let you know when he/she is full. Most babies want to eat 8-12 times in 24 hours. The more your baby nurses the more milk your body will make.
- Do not give your baby any food or drink other than breastmilk, unless ordered by your doctor for a medical problem.



Diet and Health Concerns:

- A nursing mom can eat any food she likes.
- A nursing mom may drink up to two - three 8-ounce cups of coffee or other caffeinated drinks a day.
- Alcohol easily passes into human milk and can affect a mom's ability to function. If moms choose to drink, it's best to limit to one or two small drinks a week and wait at least 2 hours after to breastfeed.
- Most medications are safe for nursing moms (ask your health care provider first).
- Moms who smoke are encouraged to breastfeed and cut down on their smoking as much as possible. Be sure to smoke outside, away from your baby, and change clothes to keep baby from breathing the smoke on your clothing.
- Many kinds of birth control that do not affect breastfeeding are available.
- Nursing moms should avoid drugs of abuse.

Lifestyle Concerns:

Returning to work

- Many moms continue to nurse after they return to work or school.
- Discuss time and space needs for expression of your milk with your employer before the birth of your baby.
- When making child care arrangements, ask about breastfeeding support. Provide breastfeeding information to child care providers.

Lack of freedom

- Breastfeeding can be done wherever the mom has a right to be.
- Expressed milk may be fed to your baby by family and other caregivers when you are not available.

Embarrassment

- Breastfeeding can be done discreetly.
- Expressed milk can be given to a baby in a bottle.

Fear of Pain

- Breastfeeding should not be painful.
- You can learn how to prevent pain by correctly positioning your baby at the breast.
- You can learn techniques for preventing your breasts from becoming too full of milk.

Lack of support from family and friends

- Family and friends can be close to the baby in many ways such as bathing the baby, reading to the baby, cuddling the baby and rocking the baby.
- Breastfeeding experts are available in the community to answer your questions and help you with breastfeeding. Ask for help!
- You can attend a support group of nursing moms.

Once you've decided to breastfeed, learn as much as you can before baby arrives. And remember, Babies were Born to be Breastfed!

Reference:

Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk. PEDIATRICS Vol.115 No. 2; February 2005, pp 496-506.

For More Information about Breastfeeding or Support While Breastfeeding please call

The Oklahoma Breastfeeding Hotline 1-877-271-MILK (6455)