

Breastfeeding & Your Baby

PARTNERS & SUPPORT PEOPLE



Just as you love, protect and nurture your new baby, there are many things you can do to support and protect your partner as they are learning to breastfeed. Your role is different but just as important.

Why learn about breastfeeding?

Having a baby can be one of the most exciting and challenging things you will ever do. You can help by learning about breastfeeding. Your support can help overcome any difficulties. Women are more likely to successfully breastfeed and for longer if they have a supportive and informed partner.

Why support breastfeeding?

- Breast milk provides all the nutrients your baby needs.
- Breast milk reduces the risk of many diseases.
- Breast milk is easier for your baby to digest.
- Breastfeeding has health benefits for your partner and baby.
- Breastfeeding is free and convenient.

How long should my partner breastfeed?

Current research recommends that you -

- Feed your baby only breast milk for around the first 6 months of life;
- Introduce solids around 6 months of age; and
- Breastfeed for 12 months or longer.

How can partners get involved?

Your confidence and relationship with your baby will grow as you care for them. Being involved can reduce what some partners describe as 'feeling left out'.

- Cuddle, sing, play, read, talk to and soothe your baby.
- Change your baby's nappy or bath your baby.
- Lay your baby on your chest ('skin to skin').
- Carry your baby in a sling, or take them for a walk in the pram.

How can a partner provide support?

Share the experience:

- Talk, ask questions, read and attend classes.
- Learn about breastfeeding and the changes in your life together.
- Try to attend health visits.

Give emotional support:

- Let your partner know that they are doing the best for your baby. Acknowledge challenges and offer gentle encouragement.
- Each new baby brings a different experience.

Provide practical support:

- Be involved with your baby and everyday activities such as cooking, cleaning, shopping and washing.
- Your partner will need time for physical recovery after the birth. Offer plenty of water and nutritious snacks.

Understand what to expect:

- It's normal to experience tiredness, sleep disturbance and a change in your sex life.
- Some days will be filled with joy and other days may be overwhelming.

Communicate:

- Spend time talking with your partner about things that happen during the day.
- Share your experience about breastfeeding with other dads, partners, close friends or family.

Look after yourself:

- If you feel stressed or are having trouble adjusting to your new role, consider speaking with a health professional.

Tips for close friends, relatives and grandparents

Your experiences and opinions are valuable. Try to:

- Give positive and encouraging comments.
- Listen and be responsive.
- Offer practical support such as caring for other children, housework and making meals.
- Learn about breastfeeding – what you know may have changed.
- Respect the decisions of the parents.

How can I find out more information

1. PHONE

Maternal and Child Health service by calling Community Health Intake (CHI) 6207 9977

Pregnancy Birth & Baby 1800 882 436

Australian Breastfeeding Association
1800 Mum 2 Mum or 1800 686 268

MensLine Australia

24/7 telephone and online support
1300 78 99 78, www.mensline.org.au

2. ATTEND

'Early Days' Group

(infants up to 3 months of age) for assessment and ongoing breastfeeding information and support.

Contact Community Health Intake (CHI) for locations and times.

3. VISIT

www.health.act.gov.au/breastfeeding

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