This resource contains reliable information relating to breastfeeding in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and provides links and information to support you at every stage.

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Having a baby and becoming a parent may be one of the most exciting and challenging things you will ever do.

Expect that it may take time to adjust to your new role, learn new skills and decide what is best for you, your baby and your family.

The support from dads, partners, family and close friends is important for your breastfeeding success. Try to encourage them to be involved.

The key stages of breastfeeding information in this resource include:
• Before you are pregnant
• When you are pregnant
• At the birth
• After the birth
• Keeping it going
• Weaning.

Links can be found on each page containing reliable resources and information:

The ACT Breastfeeding Strategic Framework 2010–2015 aims to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in the ACT.

It seeks to create an environment that supports the mother to breastfeed, and respects and supports a mother if she is not breastfeeding.

Every family is unique and each baby brings a new experience.
Breastfeeding is the optimal way to feed your baby and provides many benefits for you both. Some of them include:

**For you**
- Helps you return to your pre-pregnancy weight and health.
- Protects against breast and ovarian cancer.
- Reduces the risk of osteoporosis.

**For your baby**
- Breast milk provides all the nutrients your baby needs for around the first six months.
- Breast milk is easy for your baby to digest.
- Breast milk reduces the risk of many diseases such as diarrhoea and ear infections.

**Other positives**
- Breastfeeding helps you bond with your baby.
- Breastfeeding is convenient and free.
- Breastfeeding is environmentally friendly.

‘I decided to try after I learnt how good it is for me, my baby and our relationship. I am so glad I did. I did it by surrounding myself with people who supported breastfeeding. I loved it.’
Young parents and new parents can find information here:

- **Breastfeeding – Give it a Go – ACT Health**

**Useful links:**

- **Breastfeeding Confidence – Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)**
- **10 Facts on Breastfeeding – World Health Organization**
- **Breastfeeding Frequently Asked Questions – ABA**

If you are interested in reading the scientific research, here is a reliable resource:

- **International Breastfeeding Journal**
The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is the leading government body which promotes health standards in Australia.

The NHMRC infant feeding recommendations are:

• To encourage, support and promote ‘exclusive’ breastfeeding to around six months of age; and
• Continue breastfeeding with appropriate solid foods until 12 months of age and beyond, for as long as you and your baby wish.

‘Exclusive’ breastfeeding – What does this mean?
Your child is having only breast milk, and no other liquids (including water) or solids. Oral rehydration salts, drops, syrups (vitamins, minerals, medicines) may be required on medical advice.

*Although exclusive breastfeeding is ideal for around the first 6 months of life, any amount of breast milk is beneficial to the infant and mother.*

Breast milk provides all the nutrients your baby needs for around the first 6 months.

If you would like to read more information:

- [Australian Infant Feeding Guidelines – 2012 – NHMRC](#)
- [Breastfeeding Recommendations – 10 Facts – World Health Organization (WHO)](#)
There is a lot of breastfeeding information available and it can be confusing.

Health professionals involved in infant feeding:
• Provide you with up to date information, advice and support.
• Listen to what is important for you and your family.
• Answer your questions, guide and explore options with you.
• Support and respect your decisions.

Health professionals include GPS, Maternal and Child Health (MACH) Nurses, Midwives, Lactation Consultants and Speech Pathologists.

A health professional or qualified counsellor is there to support you through your breastfeeding experience in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT):

ACT Health – Breastfeeding Advice and Support
ACT Health – Division of Women, Youth & Children at Canberra Hospital – Maternity Care
Australian Breastfeeding Association
Calvary Health Care ACT – Bruce Campus – Maternity Care
Calvary John James Hospital – Maternity Care
Find a Health Service in the ACT – including after hours
healthdirect – Find a GP – including after hours

Remember that your partner and those close to you are a source of support.

Support and information services in the ACT can be found in the navigation bar below:

Other reliable sources of information on the web include:
• Raising Children Network
• Kids at Play
• Pregnancy, Birth & Baby
• Women’s & Children’s Health Network
Think about what is important for you.
It is never too early to read, learn and talk about breastfeeding.

Most people have a view about breastfeeding before they have a baby. What we learn at school, what we hear in our friendship groups, and what we see in the community influence our attitude. Most women are able to breastfeed with the right support and practice.

The Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) has some practical information in an e-book and on their website:

- **Breastfeeding Confidence – ABA**
- **Planning on breastfeeding, prepare to succeed – ABA**

**Talk to a health professional before you are pregnant**

It is recommended to discuss your situation if you have:

- Had breast surgery (e.g., breast implants, breast reduction or for other medical reasons).
- Weight concerns – overweight or underweight.
- A history of smoking or using illicit substances.
- An existing medical condition.
- A **Nipple Piercing (ABA)**.

If you are considering breast surgery, speak with an expert in breastfeeding to find out how it may affect your ability to breastfeed.
Starting a pregnancy in the best possible health benefits both you and your baby.

Preconception planning
If you are thinking about pregnancy, a visit to a GP with your Partner/Support Person or by yourself, is one way to start.

The 3 months before conception is the time to make changes that can help boost fertility, reduce difficulties during pregnancy and assist in recovery from birth.

Planning for Pregnancy – Pregnancy, Birth & Baby

Breastfeeding Birth Plan
Developing a breastfeeding plan is one way to start thinking about feeding your baby. A breastfeeding plan includes what you would like to have happen at the birth and after the birth, taking your medical history into consideration.

Example of a Breastfeeding Plan – Australian Breastfeeding Association

Making a Birth Plan - Pregnancy, Birth & Baby

Try to have some flexibility in your plan.
Sometimes even the best made plans change. Your health professional is there to support you if you feel that your experience is not what you had planned.

What mothers have said when their plans changed:
‘Talk about your feelings with your partner. A health professional is there to listen and support you as well.’

‘My milk didn’t come in straight away and this made the beginning of my breastfeeding journey difficult. Be prepared that things might not turn out the way you imagined but don’t be afraid to seek out advice and support from health professionals when you need it.’
Health and wellbeing
Starting a pregnancy in the best possible health is important for you and your baby. Your emotional wellbeing is also important as you may find yourself adjusting to new feelings.

Try to eat well, have a moderate amount of daily activity, and take some time out for yourself:

- **Good Nutrition in Pregnancy – ACT Health**
- **Healthy Eating During Pregnancy – Pregnancy, Birth & Baby**

During pregnancy, women often start thinking about making changes to their lifestyle. There may be some changes you would like to make for the benefit of you and your baby.

**Medications**
If you have an existing medical condition, or are taking an over the counter or prescribed medication, discuss this with your health professional. Alternative therapies can often be thought of as ‘safe’, but may not be.

Contact ACT Health Pharmacy on 6244 3333 for further information and advice.
Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs during pregnancy

Smoking – Quit for You, Quit for Two – Australian Government

No More Boondah – Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service

Beyond Today – Young People’s Stories – ACT Health

Alcohol Guidelines – National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

Drug Use In Pregnancy – Pregnancy, Birth & Baby

Breast Anatomy

Learning about the changes in your breasts during pregnancy may give you a better understanding of your body’s ability to breastfeed.

If you are interested in reading the scientific research, here is a trusted resource:

Breast Anatomy During Pregnancy – Virtual Medical Centre

If you are interested in reading more detailed information, see the:

Antenatal Care – Clinical Practice Guidelines – NHMRC
## Classes – during pregnancy

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<tr>
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</table>
| ACT Health – Centenary Hospital for Women & Children – Maternity Care | • Antenatal Clinic – When You Are Pregnant  
• Relaxing Into Parenting  
• Other Pregnancy Classes  
• Step Ahead Program – this program provides pregnancy care by a midwife, for women 20 years of age and under. This program includes outreach services at The Junction Youth Health Service & at CCCares School. Contact: (02) 6244 3470. | See link | No |
| Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) | • Breastfeeding Education Classes  
Classes held regularly across the ACT and surrounding region. Local groups provide support and talk about breastfeeding and parenting topics in various locations across Canberra. | See link | No |
| Calvary Health Care ACT – Bruce Campus – Maternity Care | Antenatal Clinic – about maternity matters. Contact: (02) 6201 6359. | See link | No |
| Calvary John James Hospital – Maternity Care | • Antenatal Education Classes  
• Breastfeeding Workshops | See link | No |
| QE II Family Centre | • Relaxing Into Parenting – And Baby Makes Three This free group has six classes before birth and two classes after birth. Contact: Relationships Australia (02) 6122 7100 or QEII (02) 6205 2333. | See link | No |
## Classes – during pregnancy

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| Relationships Australia                   | • Relaxing Into Parenting – And Baby Makes Three  
This free group has six classes before birth and two classes after birth. Contact: Relationships Australia (02) 6122 7100 or QEII (02) 6205 2333.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | See link        | No                     |
| Rainbow Families ACT                      | An informal social and parenting group for the community of LBGTIQ (Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, Intersex & Queer) parents with children from birth to school age. Offers a friendly atmosphere where children can play and parents can meet. Also offers support for those who are thinking about starting a family. Meet fortnightly.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | See link        | No                     |
| Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service | Antenatal Clinic – Classes are held as needed. Guest speakers attend, including a breastfeeding class by the Australian Breastfeeding Association.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | See link        | No                     |
| CLASS FOR FATHERS Beer and Bubs           | A one-night education session for dads at the pub. Expectant dads learn how to support their partner through the birth of their baby. There is also time to discuss other topics such as breastfeeding.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | See link        | Yes                    |

Your Partner/Support Person is always welcome to attend any of the classes with you.
The Baby Friendly Health Initiative (BFHI)* was developed by the World Health Organization and UNICEF in 1991 to improve infant health by supporting mothers to breastfeed their babies. It aims to treat every mother with respect, no matter how they are feeding their baby, and provide care, support and information before, during and after birth. In the ACT, the Canberra Hospital and Calvary Healthcare (Bruce campus) are accredited as BFHI.

The **10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding** can help you understand what to expect from your hospital stay, and beyond. BFHI accredited facilities must meet certain standards which are:

1. Have a breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all staff
2. Train all health care staff in the skills necessary to implement this policy
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding
4. Place babies in skin-to-skin contact with their mothers immediately following birth for at least an hour and encourage mothers to recognise when their babies are ready to breastfeed, offering help if needed
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed, and how to maintain lactation even if they should be separated from their infants
6. Give breastfeeding infants no food or drink other than breast milk unless medically indicated
7. Practice rooming in - allow mothers and infants to remain together - 24 hours a day
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand
9. Give no artificial teats or pacifiers (also called dummies or soothers) to breastfeeding infants
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them or discharge from the hospital or clinic.

* BFHI logo is printed with permission from The Australian College of Midwives.
**10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding**

**Step 1** Have a breastfeeding policy
This policy means that you can expect staff will promote breastfeeding and support you as you learn.

**Step 2** All staff receive breastfeeding training
The training means that staff provide the most up to date information, advice and support.

**Step 3** Breastfeeding education during pregnancy is offered
Learning how and why to breastfeed during your pregnancy gives you the best chance of success.

**Step 4** ‘Skin to skin’ contact immediately after birth is promoted
Staff will place your naked baby on your chest after birth to encourage instinctive breastfeeding behaviours from your baby.

**Step 5** We will support you to breastfeed
Staff will show you how to start and continue breastfeeding your baby before birth, after birth and as your baby grows and routines change.

**Step 6** Breast milk is all babies need
Breast milk is the only food your baby needs, so water and other liquids will not be offered. Formula is discouraged unless recommended for specific health reasons. Introducing food or other milk to your baby may affect your ability to breastfeed.

**Step 7** Keep mothers and babies together
You will be encouraged to ‘room in’ with your baby and stay with them 24 hours a day because this in known to be the best way for you to get to know your baby and build your confidence as a parent.

**Step 8** Baby-led breastfeeding
You will be encouraged to feed your baby when they are hungry and learn to follow their cues.

**Step 9** No teats or dummies for breastfeeding babies
You will find a dummy won’t be offered or available for your baby because this can affect your baby’s ability to establish breastfeeding.

**Step 10** Breastfeeding support following discharge
There are a range of services who can support you to continue breastfeeding once you go home. You will be given information on where to join groups, such as the ACT New Parent’s Groups, or ABA New Parent and Support Groups.
The first feed

Most babies will attach to the breast for their first feed if you place them ‘skin-to-skin’ at birth. This is also known as the ‘breast crawl’.

Let your baby lead for the first feed

🔗 The ‘Breast Crawl’ at birth – YouTube
🔗 Getting Started with Breastfeeding – Raising Children Network
🔗 Birth, Skin to Skin, and the First Feed – National Health Service (NHS)

‘If you can’t have ‘skin to skin’ right after the birth, this is often due to medical reasons. Your midwife will support you to have ‘skin to skin’ as soon as possible. You can still learn to breastfeed and bond with your baby.’
BREASTFEEDING IN THE ACT

At the birth

Tips for establishing breastfeeding from the beginning
• Allow your baby to feed from the breast as soon as possible after the birth.
• Keep your baby close to you in the early hours following birth. This also strengthens your baby’s immune system.
• Feed whenever your baby demands. This could be between 6 to 12 times in a 24 hour period.
• If you have a breastfeeding plan, talk with your health professional about what is important for you – be assertive and realistic.
• A lactation consultant or midwife is an expert who can support you for your baby’s early feeds.
• If you can’t breastfeed early, expressing may stimulate your milk supply.

When plans change
Sometimes even the best plans may change. Your health professional is there to support you if you feel that your experience is not what you had planned.

‘Bonding with your baby is more than feeding.’
Every person is unique...you can breastfeed no matter what size or shape you are. Every baby is unique...there is no right or wrong way to hold your baby for breastfeeding.

The first step is to learn how to attach your baby to your breast.

This film clip shows you how:

- **Breastfeeding – Positioning and Attachment – Best Beginnings**
- **Breastfeeding – Raising Children Network**

Breastfeeding is a learned skill. You may find it takes time, practise and patience to get the hang of it.

*Reproduced with permission from Best Beginnings.
How do you do it

These pictures break the steps down for you:

**STEP 1**
Hold your baby close to you with their nose level with your nipple.

**STEP 2**
Wait until your baby opens their mouth really wide with the tongue down. You can encourage them to do this by gently stroking their top lip.

**STEP 3**
Bring your baby on to your breast.

**STEP 4**
Your baby will tilt their head back and come to your breast chin first. They should take a large mouthful of breast. Your nipple should go towards the roof of their mouth.

The next step is to find what feels the most comfortable for you and your baby.

These pictures show some examples:

Breastfeeding Positions – Raising Children Network

You may need to try a few different positions to find the most comfortable position for you and your baby.

Emotional adjustment can also have an impact on attachment and breastfeeding – consider speaking with a health professional.
Your role as a partner of a new mother is important.

Mothers are more likely to overcome challenges with breastfeeding and breastfeed for longer if they have a caring and informed partner or support person. Partners and support people are encouraged to have an active part in the breastfeeding experience.

**For Partners/Support People**

- **Dads, Partners, Grandparents, Support People Fact Sheet** – ACT Health
- **The Importance of Partner Support** – Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)
- **Especially for Partners** – Breastfeeding Information – ABA

**For Dads**

- **Breastfeeding – How Dads Can Help** – Raising Children Network
- **How Dads Can Help** – Raising Children Network
For Dads
Breastfeeding and Fathers – Pregnancy, Birth & Baby
10 Tips – Life as a New Dad – Raising Children Network
First Time Dads – MensLine Australia Dads may find some challenges adjusting to their new role.
MensLine Australia Offers emotional support for men.
The Importance of Dads – Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI)
Beer and Bubs A one-night education session for dads at the pub. Expectant dads learn how to support their partner through the birth of their baby. There is also time to discuss other topics such as breastfeeding.

Dads may find some challenges adjusting to their new role.

For Rainbow Families
Rainbow Families – ACT is an informal social and parenting group for the community of LBGTIQ (Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, Intersex & Queer) parents with children.

For Grandparents
Try to talk and learn about breastfeeding – what you know may have changed.

Grandparents and Kinship Carers – Raising Children Network
The early days after birth
Breastfeeding is a learned skill. You may find it takes time, practise and patience to get the hang of it, feel comfortable and get into a routine.

In the early days, try to allow time for yourself to rest and recover after the birth.

- **Knowing what to expect from your baby** can be useful information as you adjust to your new role.
- **Let your baby take the lead.** Babies need to feed frequently – this could be every 2 hours. This is natural in the beginning because babies have tiny tummies and it encourages your milk production.
- There is no set number of times your baby should breastfeed in a day, or how long a breastfeed should take.
- **Breastfeeding – What should I expect?** – Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)
- **What’s normal? Breastfeeding, Babies and Breasts** – ABA

**Breast milk – at the beginning**
After the birth, your body will produce a type of breast milk, called colostrum (the first milk). Colostrum:
- Is a highly nutritious concentrated form of breast milk.
- Contains antibodies to protect your baby against disease.
- Is yellowish in colour and the consistency of liquid honey.

It is normal to produce only a few mls (millilitres) of colostrum. A teaspoon is around 5mls.

Colostrum provides all the nutrition your baby needs for the first few days until your milk ‘comes in’. This usually occurs around 3 to 4 days after birth. When this happens, your breasts may feel fuller, firmer and heavier.
BREASTFEEDING IN THE ACT

The Early Weeks

The early weeks after birth
In the early weeks, give yourself time to rest and recover after the birth. Feeding is a special time for you and your baby to bond.

Your baby will let you know when they are hungry.
This poster shows you some of the cues/signs to look for:

- Baby Feeding Cues – Queensland Government
- Baby Cues – Raising Children Network
- Best Start – feeding guide

Understanding newborn behaviour
It can take time to understand your baby’s cries and body language. These resources can give you some ideas:

- Understanding Newborn Behaviour – Raising Children Network
- Crying Baby Checklist – Raising Children Network
- Breastfeeding – A New Baby – Women’s & Children’s Health Network
- Sleep and Settling Your Baby – ACT Health

Understanding the changes as your baby grows
As your baby grows, they will be making big steps forward in their development.

- Wonder Weeks - Women’s & Children’s Health Network
- Baby Development – Birth to 4 Months – Pregnancy, Birth & Baby
Breastfeeding happens easily for some mothers, and not so easily for others.

Common challenges in breastfeeding include the reading material below:

- Breastfeeding after a Caesarean Birth
- Breastfeeding – Tongue–Tie
- Mastitis
- Cracked and Sore Nipples
- Medical Reasons to Substitute for Breast Milk
- Low Milk Supply
- Nipple Vasospasm
- Positioning and Attachment
- Engorgement

When things don’t go to plan

- Breastfeeding may not be as easy as you may have expected. Remember that you are learning.
- If you’ve had a difficult birth, you or your baby have medical complications, or you are significantly underweight or overweight, you may find it takes a few more days for your milk to ‘come in’.
- Unless it is your choice, if your baby requires formula this should be on medical advice and discussed with you. You are encouraged to ask questions and fully understand the reason why your baby may be recommended formula.
- Sometimes breastfeeding challenges may mean you wean earlier than you intended.

Occasionally women may benefit from lactation aides, such as nipple shields, breast pumps and certain medications. These should be used under the guidance of a health professional.

While exclusive breastfeeding is ideal for the first 6 months, any amount of breast milk is beneficial to the infant and mother.
## Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Breast milk that is...</th>
<th>Stored at room temp. 26°C OR LOWER stays good for...</th>
<th>Stored in a fridge 5°C OR LOWER stays good for...</th>
<th>Stored in a freezer -15°C OR LOWER stays good for...</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshly expressed into a sterile container</td>
<td>6 – 8 hours store milk in fridge if available</td>
<td>3 days or less no more than 72 hours (store at back where it is coldest)</td>
<td>2 weeks in freezer compartment inside a fridge (-15°C). 3 months in freezer section of fridge with separate door (-18°C). 6 – 12 months in deep freeze (-20°C)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thawed in fridge previously frozen</td>
<td>4 hours or less</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
<td>Do not refreeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thawed outside fridge in warm water</td>
<td>Only for completion of feed after feed, throw away any leftover</td>
<td>4 hours or less</td>
<td>Do not refreeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant has begun feeding</td>
<td>Only for completion of feed after feed, throw away any leftover</td>
<td>After feed, throw away any leftover</td>
<td>Do not refreeze</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Chest or upright manual defrost deep freezer that is opened infrequently and maintains ideal temperature.

### For expressed breast milk

- Freeze milk that will not be used within two days.
- Label all breast milk containers with date and time of when it was expressed.
- Use the oldest milk first.
- Breast milk will form layers after standing. This is normal. Gently swirl to mix it again.
- Do not thaw or warm breast milk in a microwave.

- **Expressing and Storing Breast Milk** – Raising Children Network
- **Expressing and Storing Breast Milk** – Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)
- **Bottle Feeding** – ACT Health
- **Breast Pumps** – ABA
- **Storage and Handling of Expressed Breast Milk** – ACT Health
If you or your baby need a planned or unplanned visit to hospital, you will be supported with breastfeeding.

If your baby is born premature or is unwell
Some babies who are born premature or unwell may have difficulty with breastfeeding from the beginning. If this happens to you, there is support and advice available for your individual situation.

Planned admissions
If you or your baby has a planned admission to hospital, e.g. surgery:
• Speak with a health professional about what is important for you and your baby for feeding before your go.
• Let the doctor and nursing staff know what you would like to happen.
• Express some breast milk before the admission and take it with you to hospital.

For your baby
The Paediatric and Neonatal (baby) wards at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children will support you with your breast milk supply and offer it to your baby wherever possible. The new unit has been designed with the space to do this.

Unplanned admissions
If you or your baby has an unplanned admission to hospital:
• Let the doctor and nursing staff know what you would like to happen.
• Ask the nursing staff to contact the lactation consultant for feeding support.

If a form of nutrition other than breast milk needs to be offered to your baby, this will be discussed with you.
Self care

Having a baby is full of challenges. It is normal to experience tiredness, irritability, sleep disturbance, aches and pains and you may feel overwhelmed by the transition to your parenting role, responsibilities and relationships.

As well as linking to support people, looking after yourself is important. Some key health areas to think about include:

- **Emotional Health & Wellbeing** – ACT Health
- **Good Nutrition While Breastfeeding** – ACT Health Water and other fluids are important to replace the fluid used to produce breast milk. A strict diet to lose weight is not recommended while breastfeeding.
- **Looking After Yourself** – Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)
- **After the Birth** – Your Body – Pregnancy, Birth & Baby
- **Emotional Wellbeing** – Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI)

**Recommendations about smoking, drinking alcohol and caffeine when breastfeeding:**

- Smoking is not recommended while breastfeeding. Smoking can affect the nutrient content of breast milk and reduce supply. It also increases the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).
- The safest option is to avoid drinking alcohol while breastfeeding.
- Limit tea, coffee and hot chocolate to 2–4 cups each day. You can reduce the amount of caffeine that passes into your breast milk by having these drinks after a breastfeed.

If you are having trouble adjusting to this change in your life, or want to learn more about ways to reduce risk to your baby, speak to your GP, a **Maternal and Child Health Nurse**, or the **Mum to Mum Helpline – 1800 686 268** – ABA.
## Classes – after birth

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<td>ACT Health – Centenary Hospital for Women &amp; Children – Maternity Care</td>
<td>ACT New Parent Groups MACH nurses facilitate first-time parent groups offering support, information and advice over 5 weekly sessions. <strong>How:</strong> Bookings through the Community Health Intake. Contact: (02) 6207 9977.</td>
<td>See link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT Health – Women, Youth &amp; Children – Health Services in the Community</td>
<td>• Early Days – Drop In Clinic Groups held weekly in Lanyon, Ngunnawal and West Belconnen Child &amp; Family Centres.</td>
<td>See link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)</td>
<td>• 24 Hour Breastfeeding Telephone Helpline – ABA Contact: 1800 686 268.</td>
<td>See link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvary Health Care ACT – Bruce Campus – Maternity Care</td>
<td>• <strong>Bringing Baby Home</strong> – A two day program held on weekends. Adjusting to life with a new baby, your relationship. Dads/Partners included.</td>
<td>See link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>First Touch Program</strong> – A learn to massage your baby program. It is internationally recognised and held on Sundays from 10:30am to 12. Dads/Partners welcome.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Calvary John James Hospital – Maternity Care</td>
<td>Postnatal care provided.</td>
<td>See link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation</td>
<td>• <strong>Young Mum’s Group</strong> – Gugan Gulwan Meets each Tuesday from 10am to 2pm. Contact: (02) 6296 8900</td>
<td>See link</td>
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## BREASTFEEDING IN THE ACT

### Classes – after birth

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QE II Family Centre</td>
<td>See link</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relaxing Into Parenting (2 postnatal classes) This free group is conducted over six weeks of prenatal sessions, and two weeks postnatal. Contact: Relationships Australia (02) 6122 7100 or QEII (02) 6205 2333.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rainbow Families ACT</td>
<td>See link</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>An informal social and parenting group for the community of LBGTIQ (Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, Intersex &amp; Queer) parents with children from birth to school age. Offers a friendly atmosphere where children can play and parents can meet. Also offers support for those who are thinking about starting a family. Meet fortnightly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service</td>
<td>See link</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mums and Bubs Group – For mothers with children under preschool age. Held Wednesdays.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Winnunga Women’s Group – Held every Thursday – children welcome.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Your Partner/Support Person is always welcome to attend any of the classes with you.
The law recognises that breastfeeding should be encouraged and supported in the community. This includes breastfeeding in public places.

**Getting out and about**

- Breastfeeding Confidence – Out and About – Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)

**Linking with other parents**

Meeting and sharing ideas with other mothers and parents can be a way to build your support network:

- CCCares School – For young people who are pregnant or have children.
- Local Support Groups – ABA
- Mums and Bubs Group – Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service
- New Parent Groups – ACT Health
- Playgroups Australia – ACT
- Rainbow Families – ACT
- Single Parents – Raising Children Network
- Young Mums’ Group – Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation

If you’re interested in reading some research:

- The Value of New Parent Groups
Breastfeeding in public

Your right to breastfeed in public is protected under the law (*ACT Discrimination Act 1991*). If you experience discrimination, you can seek advice from, or make a complaint to:

- [Breastfeeding in Public – ACT Human Rights Commission](#)

You may breastfeed anywhere, anytime.

For more information on your rights to breastfeed, visit:

- [Breastfeeding Discrimination – ACT Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Breastfeeding in Public – Your Legal Rights – Australian Breastfeeding Association](#)
Take the time to decide what is right for you and your baby.

**Returning to work**

There are many ways you can keep breastfeeding your baby once you return to work. This has benefits for you, your baby and your employer. It can be helpful to start exploring your options and discuss these with your employer before you go on maternity leave. Returning to work is often a major life adjustment.

It is against the law to discriminate against you on the grounds of breastfeeding. This includes in the workplace.

[Your Right to Breastfeed – ACT Health](#)

**Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace**

Some workplaces choose to be Breastfeeding Friendly.

A Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace provides the time, space and support you need to continue to provide breast milk for your child.

If you would like to read more information:

[Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace – Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)](#)

A list of accredited organisations can be found at:

[Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces – List of Accredited Organisations](#)

For more information about breastfeeding and returning to work:

[Breastfeeding – Going Back To Work – Raising Children Network](#)
You can breastfeed anywhere, anytime. This includes when you are using child care services.

**If you are using a childcare service in the ACT, you can:**
- Keep breastfeeding your child, or
- Provide the childcare centre with your expressed breast milk.

**Child care centres cannot:**
- Refuse an application or not offer a child care place because your child is breast feeding.
- Ask you to stop or discourage you from breastfeeding when your child starts in child care.
- Tell you that you cannot breastfeed or express your breast milk on the premises.
- Refuse to feed your child with your expressed breast milk.

If you would like to read more information:

- Breastfeeding and Childcare – ACT Human Rights Commission
- Kids at Play

It is against the law for a child care service provider to discriminate against you because you are breastfeeding.
Introduction of solid foods

At around 6 months of age, your baby will need more than breast milk for their nutrition, physical and brain growth. It is recommended to introduce other foods to your baby while continuing to breastfeed.

From Milk to More – ACT Health has information and recipes about introducing solids.

What is weaning?

The word ‘weaning’ can be confusing. It is used to describe the introduction of foods or fluids other than breast milk. A child that is fully weaned means they no longer receive any breast milk. A health professional can provide advice and support if:

• You or your baby wish to stop breastfeeding.
• You wean earlier than you wanted because of breastfeeding challenges.

How to wean

Weaning gradually is recommended. As you reduce the number of breastfeeds, expect your milk supply to reduce.

Gradual weaning protects your baby as they adjust to new foods and reduces the risk of you getting blocked ducts and mastitis.

How to Wean a Baby – Raising Children Network
Weaning and you
You may need to adjust your diet when you are no longer breastfeeding. Your appetite will naturally decrease but if you find you are having trouble adjusting to your pre pregnancy eating patterns, speak to a dietitian or other health professional.

- **Weaning** – Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)
- **The NHMRC Infant Feeding Guidelines Summary** has the recommendations about weaning and the introduction of solids.

Emotional adjustment when weaning
Sometimes your baby will decide for themselves that they have had enough which may leave you feeling sad. If you are having trouble adjusting to this change in your life, speak to a Maternal and Child Health Nurse, your GP or the Mum to Mum Helpline – 1800 686 268 – ABA.
Support services – before and after birth

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services in the ACT**

**ACT Health – Child and Family Nutrition – Community Dietitians**

Allied health – speech pathology, physiotherapy – available on referral.

**Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) – Mum to Mum Telephone Line**

Phone support is offered by trained breastfeeding volunteer counsellors 24 hours a day – 1800 686 268.

- **Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) – Email Counselling**

**Child and Family Centres in the ACT** A ‘one-stop-shop’ support for parents and carers. Maternal and child health nurses, playgroups, physiotherapy, parenting information, counselling, nutrition – Drop-in or phone weekdays.

- **Lactation Consultants of Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ)**

**MensLine Australia** Offers emotional support for men.

**Pregnancy, Birth & Baby Helpline** Telephone and internet support service providing general information about pregnancy, birthing, post-natal care and parenting in the first 12 months – 1800 882 436 (Mobile charges may apply).

**Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service** A community midwifery team and Aboriginal Access Worker provide breastfeeding support – 6284 6242 or 6284 6222.

After birth, a Maternal and Child Health (MACH) Nurse will contact you to offer a home visit for you and your baby.
Support services – after birth only

- **ACT Health – Early Days – Group Breastfeeding Support** A drop-in service for parents with infants up to 3 months of age. No appointment is necessary.
- **ACT Health – MACH Liaison** This service offers phone support during business hours and arranges home visits.
- **ACT Health Midcall**. This service may be offered by your birth hospital.
- **ACT Health – New Parent Groups** This group runs for 2 hours over 5 weeks.
  - Local Support Groups - Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)
- **QEII Family Centre** Offers a residential program which provides assistance for complex breastfeeding difficulties. Referral by a health professional essential.

**Linking with other parents**
Meeting and sharing ideas with other mothers and parents who have ‘been there’ can be a way to build your support network:

- **CCCares School** For young people who are pregnant or have children.
- **Local Support Groups – ABA**
- **Mums and Bubs Group – Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service**
- **New Parent Groups – ACT Health**
- **Playgroups Australia – ACT**
- **Rainbow Families – ACT** An informal social and play group for the community of LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, Intersex & Queer) parents with children from birth to school age.
- **Single Parents – Raising Children Network**
- **Young Mums’ Group – Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation**
If you wish to provide feedback about your breastfeeding experience in the ACT:

- **ACT Health**
  Consumer Feedback – Compliments, Comments & Complaints

- **ACT Human Rights Commission**
  Make a Health Services Complaint

- **Calvary Health Care ACT**
  Bruce Campus - How to Make a Complaint or Compliment

- **Calvary John James Hospital**
  Consumer Feedback – Comments, Compliments & Complaints

- **QE II Family Centre**
  Feedback and Complaints
Thank you to the many consumers/clients and professionals who have contributed to this resource.