



SUPPORTING YOUR PARTNER WITH BREASTFEEDING





WHAT CAN YOU DO TO SUPPORT YOUR PARTNER WITH BREASTFEEDING?

When it comes to breastfeeding, you might be thinking what you can do to support your partner and baby. The truth is you can really make a difference.

With your support, your partner is more likely to choose to breastfeed. If you support their decision then they are more likely to have a positive experience, overcome difficulties and breastfeed for longer.

- ♥ Remain positive and praise your partner for doing so well. They may need your help to feel more confident.
- ♥ Don't expect routines or schedules to take place before breastfeeding is established, this can take a few weeks.
- ♥ Don't time feeds as some feeds will take longer than others and there will be times when baby will "cluster feed" especially during a growth spurt.
- ♥ Do tasks around the house and those little jobs you have been putting off. It will take the pressure off. Your partner will feel calmer and free to feed baby as often as needed.
- ♥ Offer to give them a shoulder massage, play their favourite music, watch their favourite TV programme or movie – just be with them.
- ♥ Successful breastfeeding does not require a special diet or extra fluids but it's a good idea to offer your partner something to eat and drink regularly .
- ♥ Help them to get support if struggling with breastfeeding.
- ♥ Accept your partner's decision on when to stop breastfeeding.

With your support, breastfeeding can quickly become just another part of your family life.

Becoming a new parent can be difficult if you feel you need extra support you can find more information here:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/parenting-with-a-mental-health-problem/parenting-and-mental-health/>

<https://www.dadsmatteruk.org/dads-mental-health/dads-mental-health-getting-support-for-yourself/>

<https://thebookofman.com/mind/fatherhood/postnatal-depression-in-men/>

<https://thedadpad.co.uk/>

<https://www.northernlms.org/news/being-a-healthy-family/mental-health/>

Breastfeeding is a new skill for both parent and baby to learn - don't pressure them; just be there with them and help them as they learn.



BONDING WITH YOUR BABY

Each parent plays a different and important role and there are so many ways that you can develop a bond with your baby. Deciding together on how your baby is to be fed is important and it will really help if this is a shared decision. Some partners think they will miss out on time with their baby if they cannot join in with feeding but there are so many other things you can do:

- ♥ **SKIN TO SKIN CONTACT** - babies love being close (see skin to skin section) and this can also really help if your partner is needing to rest.
- ♥ **CO-BATHING YOUR BABY** - have a bath with your baby, just make sure the water is not too hot. There's nothing like skin-to-skin contact to bring you closer and they'll love the freedom to float on the water with you holding them safely.
- ♥ **LOOKING, LISTENING, MIMICKING, PLAYING AND SINGING** - Babies enjoy hearing gentle sounds. They've been listening to the outside world from the 18th week of pregnancy so your voice will sound familiar, they already know it's you. Reading stories, singing nursery rhymes, lullabies or your favourite songs makes a baby feel loved and helps their brain develop.
- ♥ **TRY USING A BABY CARRIER OR SLING** - being close with your baby can also reduce your stress levels and increase your mental health and wellbeing. Ask your health visitor for details of sling libraries where you can try various slings and get expert advice. See also:

<http://www.babywearing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Babywearingleaflet2013.pdf>

- ♥ **BABY MASSAGE** - A wonderful way to get to know your baby and meet other parents. Ask your Health Visitor about classes available in your area.
- ♥ **TAKE YOUR BABY OUT FOR A WALK** - Talk to them as you walk or try playing peek-a-boo, it builds trust between you and baby and it's great fun
- ♥ **GET TO KNOW THEIR FEEDING CUES AND OFFER TO BRING YOUR BABY TO YOUR PARTNER FOR FEEDS**



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WILL BREASTFEEDING AFFECT YOUR SEX LIFE?

Up to a point but remember your partner will be recovering from pregnancy and birth. Interrupted sleep will make you both feel more tired too. This has a bigger effect on sex drive than breastfeeding. See:

<https://www.nct.org.uk/life-parent/sex-after-baby/breastfeeding-and-sex-five-surprising-facts>

Take a look at these sites for more information and guides to contraception:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/support-and-services/sex-and-contraception-after-birth/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/vagina-changes-after-childbirth/>

www.fpa.org.uk/sites/default/files/contraception-after-having-baby-your-guide.pdf

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/contraception/>



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STOP SMOKING!

One of the best things you can do to help your partner and prevent health problems in your baby is to stop smoking.

- ♥ The toxic ingredients from a cigarette can stay in your breath for up to 45 minutes after smoking. These properties can cause respiratory problems such as chest infections and asthma.
- ♥ If you smoke, you should never share a bed with your baby. During the night your partner may breastfeed baby in bed and unintentionally fall asleep. Your baby will be at a higher risk of cot death or sudden infant death as baby could inhale the poisonous chemicals from within your breath.
- ♥ If you choose to continue smoking you must make sure you wash your hands and change clothes before handling your baby.
- ♥ You must never smoke a cigarette in the same room as a baby as he/she will passively inhale your exhaled smoke and this will damage his/her lungs.
- ♥ If you partner smokes, then they are more likely to quit and not restart if you quit with them.
- ♥ If you stop smoking you will not only protect your baby but also save a considerable amount of money which you can put towards a lovely treat for your family.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/breastfeeding-and-lifestyle/smoking/>

[www. https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/)

FEEDBACK FROM PARTNERS

You can make a huge difference to how your baby is fed and for how long they choose to breastfeed. With you both on board, breastfeeding can quickly become an everyday part of your lives.

'Breastfeeding is so convenient; you can feed your baby wherever you are.' (Steven)

'Managing to get away on holiday was great. Breastfeeding on the plane and in the airport was no problem.' (Mark)

'I was very proud when my wife was breastfeeding in public.' (Stephanie)





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USEFUL WEBSITES

UNICEF - Information on breastfeeding, bottle feeding, feeding a preterm baby, feeding twins and multiples, Expression and storage of breastmilk:

www.unicef.org.uk/BabyFriendly/Parents/

For information in several different languages:

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/foreign-language-resources/>

NHS Choices :

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby>

Best Beginnings - You can watch the films at:

<http://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/watch-fbtb>

Breastfeeding support:

www.abm.me.uk

www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

Drugs in Breastmilk information and fact sheets:

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/detailed-information/drugs-in-breastmilk/>

If you have specific questions about medications or treatments, you can message the Drugs in Breastmilk information service [Facebook page](#) or email

druginformation@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

Formula Milk and information on mother and infant nutrition:

First steps Nutrition

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/>

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/infant-milks-overview>

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/parents-carers>



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HELPLINES

These helplines are all run by trained volunteers.

National Breastfeeding Helpline - 0300 100 0212 (available every day, 9:30am to 9:30pm).

www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk

In Bengali/Sylheti 0300 456 2421; in Tamil, Telugu and Hindi 0300 330 5469

NCT Breastfeeding Line - 0300 330 0771 (available 8am to midnight)

www.nct.org.uk

La Leche League 0345 120 2918 (This is open from 8am to 11pm, 365 days a year). www.laleche.org.uk