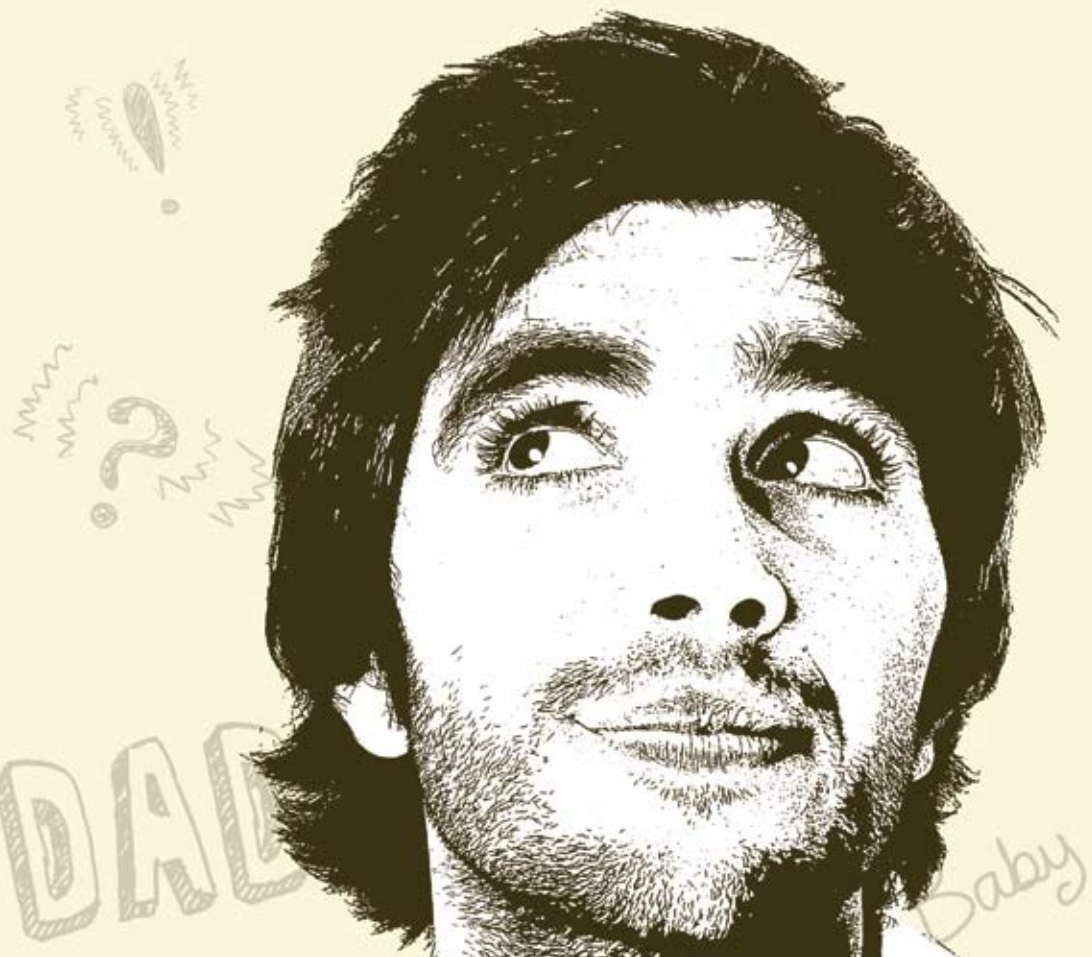


1

# A DAD'S GUIDE TO BREASTFEEDING

(MEN NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IT TOO!)



# THE BEST START FOR YOUR BABY

How you and your partner choose to feed your baby is a really important decision. While a baby's first food can be provided through breastmilk or formula, doctors, nurses and midwives agree that 'breast is best'.

Breastmilk contains the perfect blend of nutrients for your baby. Scientific evidence has repeatedly shown that breastfed babies grow up fitter and stronger than those who are bottle fed.

This leaflet, produced specifically for men, contains the facts about breastfeeding and how you can support your partner if she breastfeeds.

2

## BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING

HAPPY  
HEALTHY  
BABY!



# DAD

**Breastfeeding is good for the whole family!  
Mums and babies are generally healthier and  
it saves lots of money and hassle:**

## HEALTHIER:

Breastfed babies are less likely to become overweight or obese, have fewer ear, chest and urine infections, fewer stomach bugs and lower rates of diabetes, asthma and eczema.

## LESS HASSLE:

No need for bottles, sterilisers, or to boil kettles in the middle of the night...breastmilk is good to go at any time.

## ON DEMAND:

Breastmilk never runs out and the more often your baby feeds, the more your partner makes.

## MONEY SAVING:

The cost of formula milk, bottles and sterilising equipment could be more than £600 a year.

## HEALTHIER, HAPPIER MUM:

Women who breastfeed are less likely to develop breast and ovarian cancer, diabetes, weak bones in later life, and post-natal depression. Breastfeeding enhances mother-child bonding, helps the uterus return to normal size after birth and may help with weight loss.



3

YOUR SUPPORT  
IS IMPORTANT!



**For many women, their partner is their main source of support with breastfeeding.**

Many breastfeeding women give up sooner than they want to. This is almost always due to a lack of support and information. You can be integral in keeping breastfeeding going.

The more supportive you are, the longer your partner is likely to breastfeed and the more confident she'll feel.

While breastfeeding is a natural process, it is also a learned skill. Breastfeeding isn't always easy at first and can take a few weeks for both mum and baby to get used to.

Some breastfeeding mums go through a rough patch, but good support and encouragement from you can help her get through it.



4

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

YOU CAN'T  
DO THIS BUT...



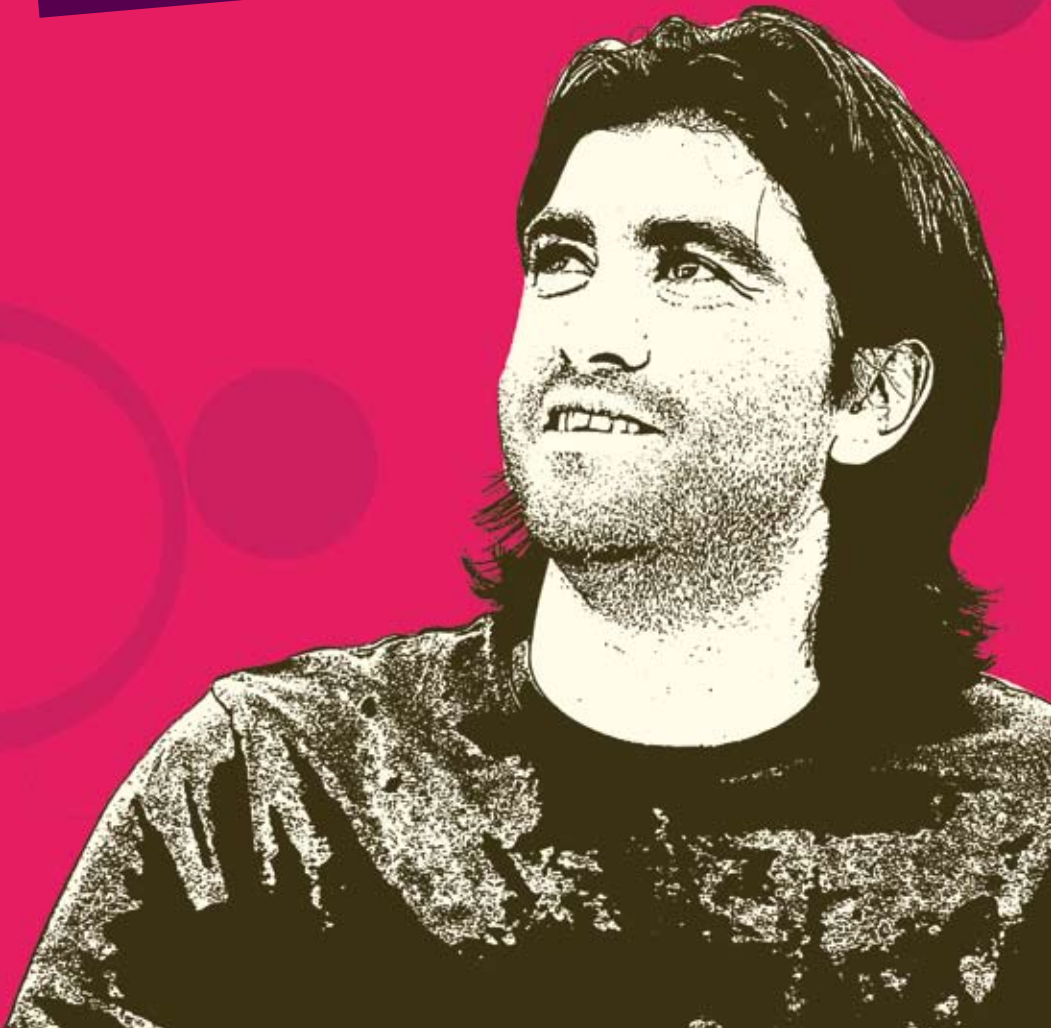
**Make sure your partner is comfortable while breastfeeding. Help her check the baby's positioning and latch-on during breastfeeding (see tips below) and offer to adjust any cushions etc.**

- While she is nursing, bring your partner a drink, snack, pillow or footstool, or massage her shoulders.
- Take on more of the housework yourself or get help, particularly in the early weeks. Make sure there is plenty of food in the house by doing the grocery shopping and cooking nourishing meals.
- Feeding mum is feeding baby - often the feed time before baby going down for bed in the evening is a great opportunity for you to cook a meal for you and your partner, so although you aren't involved directly in feeding your baby you are providing a healthy and welcome meal for mum, and indirectly for baby.
- If you have older children, spend time with them so your partner can spend time with your baby or catch up on sleep.
- If your partner is considering stopping breastfeeding early on, encourage her to keep going by being positive and praising the progress she's made so far. Providing reassurance, particularly when she's tired or frustrated, will help boost her confidence.
- Get specialist help if your partner is experiencing difficulties with breastfeeding. Keep a list of phone numbers handy so you can easily call your local health visitor, breastfeeding counsellor, midwife, or GP.
- Protect your partner's and baby's privacy and shield them from unwanted visitors or unhelpful or inappropriate advice.



5

# USEFUL THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT BREASTFEEDING



- For the first six months, babies should be exclusively breastfed.
- Breastfed babies usually feed frequently (at least every two to three hours) in the early weeks, especially during the evenings.
- Every mother's milk is tailor-made for her own baby.
- It contains many ingredients that help a baby stay healthy, such as antibodies to fight germs, hormones and factors that help your baby's development.
- As long as your partner has a sensible, balanced diet, there's nothing she has to avoid eating or drinking altogether. Although the occasional drink is unlikely to do your baby much harm, it's best to avoid alcohol.
- From about six months, you can start introducing a range of 'non-milk' food gradually, but it's best to continue breastfeeding as well.

6

ATTACHING  
BABY TO  
BREAST





Hold baby close, place their nose level with the nipple.



Wait until your baby's mouth opens really wide with the tongue down. Stroke the baby's lips or cheek to stimulate the rooting reflex.



Quickly bring the baby even closer to the breast.



Your baby will tilt his head back and come to the breast chin first. They should take a large mouthful so most of the areola (dark part of the nipple) is in his mouth, with the nipple towards the roof.

- Nipple soreness or pain during feeding can be a sign that the baby is not latching onto the breast properly. The baby needs to open his mouth really wide, have the nipple in the top part of his mouth and have his chin against his mother's breast to feed well.
- Very few women cannot breastfeed because of medical reasons. However, many women experience difficulties if the baby is not latched onto the breast properly.

"I DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE ABOUT MY PARTNER SHOWING HER BREASTS IN PUBLIC"

- Talk to your partner so that you can agree how to handle it. Many men who feel like this before their baby is born change their minds later when they are used to seeing breastfeeding.
- Breastfeeding can be done without anyone noticing. Your partner can use the cradle or football hold and spread a blanket, scarf or shawl over the baby and her shoulder to cover the baby's head and her breast.
- There are many clothes and accessories, like breastfeeding tops, bras, slings and canopies, available if your partner wants them.
- Many places welcome breastfeeding and provide facilities for mothers to feed in private if they prefer. In restaurants or shops, don't be afraid to ask if there is a quieter area available. If outside, try to find an unpopulated area, preferably with a bench or seat.

"HOW DO I KNOW IF MY BABY IS GETTING ENOUGH MILK?"

- Your baby is feeding regularly and appears content after most feeds.
- They are healthy and gaining weight after the first two weeks.
- After the first few days, your baby should have about six wet and two dirty nappies a day.

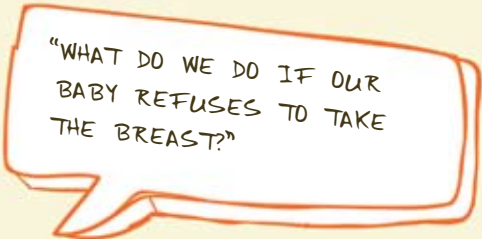


"WHAT DO WE DO IF OUR  
BABY WON'T LATCH ON TO THE  
BREAST PROPERLY?"

DAD

Babies have a natural sucking reflex, but some need help to attach well to the breast and suck strongly. Some may be very small (e.g. born prematurely) or unwell at birth and unable to go to the breast straight away.

- Get the baby to suck on a finger then quickly transfer to the breast.
- Try expressing a little breastmilk for the baby to taste as the baby tries to attach.
- If your baby is very sleepy, try to wake him by unwrapping and undressing him, and playing with his toes or hands.
- If your baby won't take one breast, try the other one!



"WHAT DO WE DO IF OUR  
BABY REFUSES TO TAKE  
THE BREAST?"

- Don't worry if your baby only wants a few minutes at the breast. By the time they are three to five months old, babies can take a lot of milk in two or three minutes.
- Feed in a quiet, dark room.
- Feed when the baby is asleep or sleepy (after the baby is three months old).
- Give more feeds at night, especially in hot weather.
- Walk around and pat your baby while feeding.



"WILL WE BE STUCK AT HOME IF MY PARTNER IS BREASTFEEDING?"

- No! Breastfeeding can be done anywhere. Babies can be taken out without any of the hassle of having to boil water, disinfect bottles or carry enough formula.
- If your baby needs to be left at home without mum, breast milk can be expressed and stored in the fridge or freezer and either you or a carer can feed the baby.

"CAN MY PARTNER BREASTFEED IF SHE'S SICK?"

- A minor illness, like a cough or cold, should be no problem and she can continue to breastfeed.
- Otherwise, take advice from a doctor or health visitor.
- A small amount of any drug mum takes will pass to her baby through her breastmilk. Women should always ask their doctor before taking any medication.
- The most important thing is to keep on feeding the baby, or expressing milk, to keep the milk supply going.

"WILL BREASTFEEDING  
AFFECT OUR  
SEX LIFE?"

It can take a while to return to normal sexual activity, no matter how the baby is fed. Soreness, tiredness and lack of time are common problems. However, it is definitely possible for you and your partner to enjoy an active sex life while breastfeeding.

- Try to feed and settle the baby before having sex. This will help reduce the likelihood of your partner leaking breast milk and of being disturbed by your baby crying.
- Because of hormone changes, some women experience vaginal dryness during breastfeeding. Using a lubricating gel can help overcome this and make intercourse more comfortable.
- Breasts can leak milk when they're stimulated. Don't be phased by this and keep a soft towel handy.
- Your partner may feel self-conscious about her body after giving birth. Help her feel loved and attractive again by giving her lots of attention and reassurance.
- Breastfeeding is sometimes used as a method of contraception, as it delays the return of a woman's periods. However, it is not reliable, so if you definitely don't want to have another baby just yet, it's best to use other forms of contraception while breastfeeding.





## HELPING WITH YOUR BABY'S FEEDS

After the first few weeks when breastfeeding is going well, you and your partner might want to express milk so that you can do an occasional feed. Milk can be expressed by hand or by a pump.

Use a sterilised container for the milk. You can store milk in the fridge at a temperature of between 2°C and 4°C for up to 24 hours, or in the freezer for up to six months.

Try to put off introducing expressed breast milk until your baby is four to six weeks old, to allow your baby the chance to get comfortable feeding at the breast. As some women find expressing breast milk uncomfortable or even painful, take care not to put too much pressure on your partner.

# GETTING CLOSER WITH YOUR BABY

With breastfeeding, parents do have different roles to play. While it helps to develop a strong bond between mum and baby, dads can sometimes feel jealous or left out. Try to remember that breastfeeding is just one aspect of caring for your baby. There are plenty of other ways to care for and be close to your baby.

- Cuddle, bathe, massage, rock and lie with your baby on your bare chest – babies love skin-to-skin contact.
- Get to know your baby (and help them get to know you) by talking, singing and playing games.
- Get involved before and after breastfeeding - you can bring baby to mum, change their nappy, get their wind up and rock them to sleep.
- You can also read stories, go for walks with baby in the pram or in a sling to give your partner some time to herself.

The more you get involved with caring for your baby, the more quickly you'll develop a strong bond. Babies often love the sound of their dad's voice and the security of being held in their arms. Supporting your partner with breastfeeding is one of the most important things you will do for your child. Try to enjoy this time – it is busy and tiring but the rewards are amazing!

## TEN THINGS THAT CAN MAKE BREASTFEEDING EASIER



- A good nipple cream can soothe cracked/sore nipples.
- Breast pads - reusable ones are cheaper and get better as you use them. You will need about 12 of these. Disposable ones are also widely available.
- Savoy cabbage - their leaves can help with painful breasts in the early days.
- 2 or 3 decent nursing bras (try them out - are they easy to open 1 handed?).
- 2 or 3 loose fitting tops or shirts to enable easy access when out and about.
- A back up supply of expressed breast milk in the fridge and 1 or 2 bottles, just in case baby is hungry and mum is struggling.
- Lots of treats for mum.
- A large V shaped cushion may be helpful on the lap for supporting baby when feeding.
- A clean muslin can be used to cover baby and mum for extra privacy, then used for wiping little mouths and placed on the shoulder for winding afterwards.
- Keep a list of key phone numbers handy so you can easily call your local midwife, health visitor, or breastfeeding counsellor for help.

## REFERENCE

**Be A Star** - Dads and Breastfeeding. Available at:  
[www.beastar.org.uk/archives/category/dads-and-breastfeeding](http://www.beastar.org.uk/archives/category/dads-and-breastfeeding)

**Fatherhood Institute** - Dads and Breastfeeding Leaflet.  
Available at: [www.fatherhoodinstitute.org](http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org)

**NHS** - Breastfeeding, what could be more natural?  
Available at: [www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk](http://www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk)

**World Health Organisation** - 10 Facts on Breastfeeding.  
Available at: [www.who.int/features/factfiles/breastfeeding](http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/breastfeeding)

## RESOURCES JUST FOR DADS AND DADS-TO-BE

[www.babyworld.co.uk/hottopics/fordads](http://www.babyworld.co.uk/hottopics/fordads)

[www.bbc.co.uk/parenting/family\\_matters/you\\_dad](http://www.bbc.co.uk/parenting/family_matters/you_dad)

[www.dadcafe.co.uk](http://www.dadcafe.co.uk)

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Moneyandworkentitlements](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Moneyandworkentitlements)

[www.fatherhoodinstitute.org](http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org)

[www.newdadssurvivalguide.com](http://www.newdadssurvivalguide.com)

[www.nhs.uk/planners/pregnancyareplanner](http://www.nhs.uk/planners/pregnancyareplanner)

[www.workingwithmen.org](http://www.workingwithmen.org)

## ACTIVITY GROUPS FOR DADS IN BRIGHTON & HOVE

The Family Information Service (FIS) is a free, impartial service provided by Brighton & Hove City Council, which offers detailed information and advice on childcare and a wide range of services for children and young people and their families in the city.

The FIS team runs several free, ongoing activities in Brighton and Hove just for dads, stepdads, granddads, and any male carer.

For more information on these groups and advice about what is happening in your area, contact the FIS team on (01273) 293545 or visit their website at: [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk)