



10 tips for a successful breastfeeding journey

breastfeeding is a wonderful natural experience that provides deep connection between mum & baby. Your breast milk, with its perfect balance of nutrients, is an invaluable life gift for your baby. ensuring that you are well informed & prepared, gives both you & baby the best chance of a successful breastfeeding experience. these 10 quick tips are designed to support your breastfeeding journey.

1. prepare, inform, explore

studies show that learning about breastfeeding before your baby is born makes it easier to establish a successful breastfeeding journey once baby arrives. it is easier to absorb this information during your pregnancy which gives you greater confidence once your baby arrives. as a result, you will both be less likely to experience difficulties feeding and more likely to enjoy breastfeeding for longer.

options for breastfeeding education during pregnancy include:

- antenatal breastfeeding classes at your hospital
- private sessions (eg. mumsmilk)
- many great books, dvd's, and websites available

similarly, ensure that you are familiar with the resources available to you before your baby arrives. help is ready and waiting if you experience any challenges after birth:

- breastfeeding services through your hospital or council
- private lactation consultants (eg. mumsmilk)
- australian breastfeeding association - breastfeeding helpline 1800 686 268, <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au>
- local support groups (aba, council)
- experienced mums & friends

2. choose a 'breastfeeding friendly' place for your birth

discuss breastfeeding with your midwife and/or obstetrician well ahead of time. if you are planning to have your baby in a hospital, make sure that "rooming in" is the standard. this means that baby will be by your side 24 hours a day, unless medically indicated. plan & prepare for a natural and ideally unmedicated birth so that the natural process is not disturbed. This further improves the odds for a successful breastfeeding journey. mention in your birth plan that nothing other your breast milk should be given to your baby unless medically indicated.

3. create a breastfeeding oasis

treat yourself to a supportive nursing bra or two, breast pads and t-shirts with easy access for breastfeeding. also have some heat/cool packs on standby at home. hey are very handy if your breasts ever feel engorged, painful or you have signs of blockage or inflammation. some mums find it helpful to have a breastfeeding pillow, a breast milk pump and breast milk storage bags on hand. these can also be purchased later on if you find you need them.

create a warm, cosy & inviting breastfeeding space at home where you will spend many hours in the first few weeks. soft light, relaxing music and a comfy (rocking) chair or sofa all help. you may also wish to have some pillows to help support you and a small stool or cushion to prop your feet up on. naturally, when you are feeling relaxed and comfortable, baby will too. It also helps you to produce the right hormones and your milk let down will be faster & easier.



4. your baby belongs by your side

ideally, your baby should not be separated from you once he/she is born unless medically necessary. most medical procedures can be done while your baby is skin to skin on your tummy. once baby is born he/she can go straight on to your chest. skin-to-skin contact with your baby after birth triggers baby's innate responses. most babies will start searching and latching for the first breastfeed within the first hour. give your baby this time and chance to use their instincts to find your breast and to self attach. you will be amazed just how clever your little one is!

if your baby is not attaching initially, you may help a little bit by guiding her/him to your breast. your midwife or lactation consultant can help guide you or even demonstrate how to attach your baby on a doll. if you are in a hospital, choose to "room in". that way, your baby is with you 24 hours a day unless medically indicated. again, this supports you and your baby's natural hormonal "orchestra" and is very important in establishing a successful breastfeeding journey.

5. correct attachment & positioning are the keys

many breastfeeding challenges are caused by incorrect attachment/positioning of the baby. correct attachment and positioning is the key to avoiding nipple damage and its cascading effects and ensuring baby is getting enough milk. do your best to establish the right latch from the first feed onwards. there are lots of great resources on the web about the correct latching technique. you may wish to watch a few videos before your baby is born.

until breast feeding is established try to breastfeed without introducing bottles or dummies. if you do need to express your milk to feed your baby, finger or cup feeding could be an alternative and won't lead to suck confusion for baby. ask your midwife or lactation consultant for more details.

6. watch your baby not the clock

let your baby set the pace and feed your baby on demand. this means feeding your baby when he/she is hungry, not restricting feeds by frequency or duration. watch for your baby's subtle feeding cues such as licking lips or turning head to side with open mouth. newborn babies should feed around 8 to 12 times a day, though some babies will feed more. remember, newborn stomachs are very little and prefer multiple smaller snacks rather than just a few large meals.

7. practice makes perfect

breastfeeding is a natural process, it sometimes requires experimentation and patience from both mum and baby. few mums get it right straight away and no one is perfect. with a little practice, you will both get the hang of it and be richly rewarded for your efforts!

8. need help? then ask for it!

if you are experiencing breastfeeding difficulties, have unanswered questions or are feeling frustrated.....ask for help! you don't need to wait until things get worse. particularly if your baby isn't gaining weight or you are experiencing discomfort, pain, nipple trauma. there are many people who can work alongside you to help solve these problems (see tip #1). we would love to care for you!

9. out & about in public

although it's the most natural way of feeding a baby, some mums dread the moment they have to feed their baby in public. it may help to prepare yourself by practising at home before you head out. sit in front of a mirror and watch yourself feeding your baby. baby's head will cover most of your breast with just a little skin visible. if you are uncomfortable with this, you may choose to use a baby blanket or scarf, or you may be quite relaxed with your t-shirt covering your breast. just remember confidently that breastfeeding is the most natural way of feeding a baby. again, if you can stay relaxed, chances are baby will too.



10. get enough rest and look after yourself

when your baby is born he/she can't distinguish between day and night. a circadian rhythm will emerge when your baby is about 2-3 months old. until then, try to 'go with the flow' and sleep when your baby is sleeping - even if that's during the day.

eat a healthy balanced diet and drink plenty of water, and take your supplements if recommended by your health professional.

make sure your partner is involved too. their support will help your recovery and deepen their own bonding experience with baby. help with changing nappies, waking up for feeds, bathing baby and gently rocking baby to sleep are all ways to participate.

get help from your family and friends with the household and allow them to pamper you! your focus should be on recovering from birth, breastfeeding and getting to know your beautiful baby. remember to enjoy and celebrate the many wonderful moments that breastfeeding will bring.

trust your instincts - mum knows best. be proud of your achievements - you are doing an amazing job!

all the very best to mum & baby,



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