

Breastfeeding



Why Breastfeed?

The short and long term health benefits of breastfeeding for baby and mother is well recognized. The reason why breast milk is regarded as the ideal food for babies is because it is nutritionally balanced. It contains the perfect amount of proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and iron, which are all essential for the baby's growth. It also contains antibodies that help to protect babies from infection, and the milk changes to suit the different needs of babies as they grow.

Recent research shows the greatest influence on mums' decision to breastfeed is the father. This places fathers in a very unique and important position to affect the health of their baby. Many couples do not discuss their thoughts and beliefs about breastfeeding before arrival of their baby and this may lead mum to incorrectly perceive that dad would not support her decision to breastfeed and lead to baby being fed artificial milk.

Communication between mum and dad is vital and especially so before baby is born. By discussing both the positive and negative feelings you may have towards breastfeeding, you are more likely to be able to make the right decisions and be able to work through the challenges couples face after the arrival of their newborn.

This article has been designed to educate the reader into the benefits of breastfeeding with dads in mind so they can be informed about how they can help mum give their baby the best ever start in life.

Did you know?

Breastfeeding has been shown to have important health advantages for both mother and baby

For Baby

- ✓ *Breastmilk is adapted to the exact needs of your baby*
- ✓ *Protects against Gastroenteritis & chest infections*
- ✓ *Less likely to develop conditions like Asthma, Diabetes and Eczema*
- ✓ *Prevents ear and urinary infections*
- ✓ *Reduces the incidence of developing allergies*
- ✓ *Less likely to develop childhood obesity*

For Mum

- ✓ *Helps to lose weight gained during pregnancy and regain her prepregnant shape faster*
- ✓ *Causes the Uterus to contract reducing the risk of bleeding after birth*

- ✓ *Reduces the risk from premenopausal breast cancer and Osteoporosis*
- ✓ *Reduces the risk of ovarian cancer*

Bonding with Your Baby

Some dads feel left out if mum is nursing .and may find it hard to bond with their child, especially when they have been out at work all day. These are normal feelings many dads experience. There are many opportunities for you to reconnect with your child:

- ✓ *Bathing and skin to skin contact is a great way to get to know your baby*
- ✓ *When not feeding simply holding and playing with baby will improve your confidence*
- ✓ *Make bedtime your special time- Preparing baby for bedtime is an ideal time to nurture your relationship*
- ✓ *Talking, praying and cuddling your baby will help baby recognise your voice and smell*

Taking Care Of Mum

Breastfeeding is a natural process but might not happen automatically. Both mum and baby have to learn. Having a new baby might be overwhelming for mum. Mum may question her ability to breastfeed and it is at this time dads need to provide encouragement telling mum how well she is doing and reminding her of the benefits.

Further ways dads can take care of mum:

- ✓ *Preparing meals and helping with housework so mum can concentrate on baby*
- ✓ *Ensure mum eats well– feeding mum feeds baby*
- ✓ *Sending mum off to soak in a bubble bath*
- ✓ *Bringing baby to mum when its time for feeding*
- ✓ *Holding baby while mum gets comfortable*
- ✓ *Getting mum a drink while nursing– mums are always thirsty & need extra fluids*
- ✓ *Sitting together, simply talking while baby feeds can make nursing an intimate experience for all the family*
- ✓ *Being there to listen to mum & offering support*
- ✓ *Telling mum what a good job she's doing*

For Further information & advice about feeding your baby speak to your midwife, health visitor or GP.

Breastfeeding support team:

Batley Team- Baby Café, Staincliffe & Healey Children's Centre, Chestnut Avenue, Staincliffe, Tel 01924 326920 or contact PALS for further info on breast support groups in your area on 01484 464464

Alternatively try these websites:

www.breastfeeding.nhs.uk

www.la lecheleague.org

www.breastfeeding.com