

A to Z

of Breastfeeding



Healthworks
the community health charity

A Again?

Breast milk contains very little waste product and is easily digested, which means that breastfed babies will need to be on the boob frequently in the early days. Now, please rest assured that regardless of what your mother-in-law, or Julie across the road, thinks this is actually very normal baby behaviour. Our best advice would be to prepare yourself for the long haul. Snuggle down on the sofa with the essentials in reach, TV remote, phone, cuppa and snacks!

B Breastfeeding friendly clothes

It is entirely possible to breastfeed in everyday clothing. Many women opt for the one up one down (OUOD) technique, which involves wearing a stretchy vest underneath another top, the vest can be pulled down to give boob access, whilst the other top then provides a little bit of cover should mum feels she needs it. Of course, there is also the aptly named flop one out technique (FOO), which is pretty self-explanatory. So really, there's no need to splash the cash on clothing. However, if you want to use breastfeeding as an excuse to buy a whole new wardrobe, then go for it!

C Calories

Public service announcement: Breastfeeding can burn up to 500 calories a day, the equivalent of a 45minute jog! So you can sit on the sofa, eat cake, and still burn calories!

D Daddy

When the baby is having a(nother) feed in the night, you may find yourself glaring at your snoring partner and his useless nipples. Although yes, he may be lacking in the milk production department, there is plenty that Daddy can be doing. He can build his bond by holding, cuddling and changing baby, and supporting you both on your breastfeeding journey.

E Engorgement

Engorgement is a term used to describe an excessive milk build up in the breasts, causing them to become quite swollen, and feel tight. Although the Pamela Anderson look may sound like a novelty, the reality certainly isn't, and it's really important that engorgement is eased quickly.



F Fidget beads

As your nursing grows, you may find that their hands start to wander during feeds. Although seeing your hair gently curled around their dainty digits may seem adorable at first- be warned. Before long you can expect this to progress to pulls, pinches and even the dreaded nipple twiddle! But fear not, a solution has been found in the form of a soft silicone necklace worn by mum. Baby's fidgety fingers can grab and pull on the beads whenever the urge takes them, and you can feed once more without fear!

G Gymnastics

If you have ever breastfed a toddler, then you may be familiar with their unique ability to latch whilst doing the limbo or drink mid downwards dog! Gone are the days of the calm cradle hold, feeding time has now become the perfect time for your little one to perfect their Paris 2024 Olympic routine.

H Holly McNish

If you haven't heard of the poet Hollie McNish, seriously where have you been? Her poem 'Embarrassed' is pretty much essential reading for anyone, but especially breastfeeding mums these days.

I Immune system

One of breast milk's most impressive qualities is its ability to build and support a baby's immune system. It can protect from infectious illnesses that the mum catches whilst breastfeeding, as well as those she has had previously. Recent studies have even shown that Covid 19 antibodies can be found in breast milk up to 10 months after a mother's infection!

J Jugs, baps, melons...

Whatever you call them, breasts are amazing in every context! Although you may notice more than a hint of hypocrisy when getting them out for their intended use in public. Sadly, 1 in 4 woman in the UK report having been told to cover up whilst breastfeeding.





K Knowledge

Or in some cases a lack of it, can really impact on feeding methods. In the UK we have a strong culture of formula feeding, so many new mums may never have even seen another woman feeding. Unfortunately this can lead to common misconceptions such as: breastfeeding always hurts at the start (wrong), you can't breastfeed if you have small breasts (wrong), breastfeeding makes your boobs saggy (also wrong).. sound familiar?

L Legality


FYI: It is completely legal to breastfeed in any public place in the UK. A woman can not be asked to leave a venue because she is breastfeeding, and has no obligation to cover herself whilst she feeds. So ladies, as Cassi Clark recommends, turn those nursing covers backwards like capes and be proud to be the breastfeeding superhero you are!

M Milestones

From the first feed to 6 weeks, 6 months, and beyond, each and every milestone matters! Partners take note- some women like to celebrate and commemorate these with keepsakes such as charms or keyrings. Breast milk jewellery is also becoming a really popular choice; the mum's own milk is hardened till it takes the form of a beautiful precious stone which is then set in a piece of jewellery. Forget diamonds, breastmilk (and the reminder of the wonderful start you gave your nursling) is really forever!

N Nipple piercings

The trend of nipple piercings has been around since the 17th century, so rest assured that pierced women have been feeding their babies at the boob for a long time. That said, there are a few potential problems that these pretty piercings can cause, and the body jewellery should always be removed prior to your little one latching, to prevent the possibility of choking.





O Oxytocin

Ahh oxytocin, the cuddle chemical! Whenever you breastfeed this love hormone is released not just in your brain, but your baby's brain as well. This plays a huge role in helping you bond with your baby, not to mention helping your body recover from birth, reducing stress and lowering blood pressure. What's not to love?

P Positioning and attachment

The key to getting breastfeeding off to a good start lies in how your baby is positioned, and how deeply they can latch on to the breast. Sometimes it can take a little bit of practice for both you and baby. Although breastfeeding is natural, it is something which often needs to be learned, rather than coming automatically; think natural like walking, not natural like breathing.


Q Questions

It is so important to ask any questions, or seek out any support you may need on your feeding journey, please do not struggle in silence. Your midwife, health visitor or local breastfeeding support team are all on hand to help.

For any breastfeeding questions, support or just a chat please do get in touch with us on our central line: 07826531575, Monday- Friday between 9am-4pm. You can also drop us a message on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/breastfeedingmams.

R Rates of feeding

In the UK 8 out of 10 women stop breastfeeding before they are ready to. The World Health Organisation recommends that a child should be breastfed until age 2 and beyond, but by 12 months only 0.5% of children in the UK receive any breast milk at all; the worst rate in the whole world! This is thought to be due to a combination of lack of public health funding in breastfeeding support, aggressive marketing campaigns from formula companies and a general negative attitude towards breastfeeding.



S Savings

Calling all bargain hunters: did you know that exclusively breastfeeding your baby for the first 6 months of their life can save you around £500. Disclaimer: many women (myself included) may find that due to online shopping during night feeds, their credit card bill also rises by about £500. An even more impressive potential saving is the £40m to the NHS that would be made each year with just a moderate rise in UK breastfeeding rates.

T Tandem feeding

Tandem feeding means feeding two or more children of different ages at the same time. This often happens when a younger sibling is born whilst an older child is still feeding. If you ever doubt a woman's ability to make milk for multiple children, just remember that in the past wet nurses would feed up to 6 babies at a time!

U Unite

As the African proverb goes, it takes a village to raise a child, and breastfeeding social groups can be a really good way to meet like-minded women to join your tribe!

Here at Healthworks our groups are really relaxed and informal, you can get any support you may need from staff and volunteers and maybe even find your new breast friends!

You can drop in, with no need to pre-book:

- Monday: 10:00-11:30am @St Martins Centre, Roman Avenue, NE6 2RJ
- Tuesday: 1-2pm virtual group via zoom (please contact us on 07826531575 or www.facebook.com/n/breastfeedingmams for the link)
- Wednesday: 10:00-11:30am @Nunsmoor Centre, Studley Terrace, NE4 5AH
1- 2.30pm@ The Lemington Centre, Tyne View, NE15 8RZ
- Thursday: 1- 2:30pm Fawdon Children's Centre, Cairns Way, NE3 2SN



V Vindaloo

It's perfectly fine to eat spicy food when feeding. It is thought that what you eat can slightly change the flavour of your milk, but it shouldn't unsettle baby. Some experts even believe that exposing your baby to a range of strong flavours through your milk will lead to them becoming more adventurous with their own food choices when the time comes to try solids- definitely the perfect excuse to treat yourself!

W Whip it out...

What could you do if your little one is tired? Hungry? Upset? In an unfamiliar environment? Or how about if you just need a rest and a cuddle? The answer to all of the above is to breastfeed! As well as nutrition, breastfeeding is about love, comfort and reassurance. It is impossible to overfeed a baby who is exclusively fed at the breast, and as a wise woman once said: if you feed for comfort, the nutrition will take care of itself.

X Xtreme breastfeeding

One of the great things about breastfeeding is how portable it is! The only equipment you need is yourself and your baby, which means you can feed pretty much anywhere. For women 'anywhere' can be much more daring than others. Think breastfeeding while mountain climbing, kayaking or whilst upside down in a yoga pose - amazing.


Y Yummy

Because it is high in lactose, breast milk has a very sweet flavour in comparison to cow's milk. Breastmilk can also be frozen into ice lollies, ideal for teething babies, and suitable for little ones who are not yet old enough to wean on to solids.

Z Zzzzzz

It is the biological normal to breastfeed your baby to sleep and through the night, and won't spoil them or cause bad habits. But, did you know, breastfeeding mums actually statistically get more sleep than formula feeding mums!? When breastfeeding, the hormone prolactin is released into mum's blood which allows them to fall asleep faster. The milk your boobs produce at night time is also high in the amino acid tryptophan which helps your baby produce melatonin and develop their own circadian rhythm.

Many thanks to Jennifer Storey from our Amazing Start team for providing the content for this A-Z Guide to Breastfeeding.



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Working with parents and families, we provide antenatal and breastfeeding information and support through a team of trained staff and volunteers.

We can offer group or one to one support to help you achieve your breastfeeding goals, build a happy baby and guidance on returning to work.

Our Breastfeeding Social Groups are relaxed, informal and friendly and offer a great way to meet other breastfeeding mums, get handy tips and an opportunity to get support from a member of staff or a volunteer.

You can call the team on 07826531575, find [breastfeedingmamsnewcastle](https://www.facebook.com/breastfeedingmamsnewcastle) on facebook or contact us via our website www.healthworksnewcastle.org.uk

