

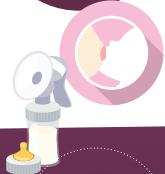
THIS SUCKS!

BREASTFEEDING CHALLENGES & HOW TO OVERCOME THEM



The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all moms breastfeed for at least the first six months. Although experts believe breast milk is the best nutritional choice for infants, breastfeeding may not be possible for all women.

For many, the decision to breastfeed or formula feed is based on their comfort level, lifestyle, and specific medical situations. Breastfeeding can be easy from the get-go for some mothers, but take a while to get used to for others.



For those moms and babies who find breastfeeding challenging, here are ways to make things suck a little less:

1

INITIAL DISCOMFORT

As with any new skill, many moms feel uncomfortable with breastfeeding. With adequate education, support, and practice, most moms overcome this initial discomfort.



LATCH-ON PAIN

Experiencing pain when baby first latches is normal for the first week to 10 days and should last less than a minute. If breastfeeding hurts throughout feedings, or if the nipples or breasts are sore, it's a good idea for mom to seek the help of a lactation consultant or doctor. Many times, it's just a matter of using a different technique, but sometimes pain can mean that something else is going on, like an infection.

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TIME COMMITMENT

Breastfeeding requires a substantial time commitment from moms. Some women may be concerned that nursing will make it hard for them to work, run errands, or travel because of a breastfeeding schedule. These concerns can be addressed by a prenatal lactation consultant.



FREQUENT FEEDINGS

Breastfed babies eat more often than babies who are fed formula. Breast milk digests faster than formula, so you may find yourself in demand every 2 or 3 hours (maybe more, maybe less) in the first few weeks.

This can definitely be tiring. Once breastfeeding has been established (usually in about a month), other family members may be able to help out by giving the baby pumped breast milk. Usually after 3 months, babies feed less frequently and sleep through the night.

DIET

Women who are breastfeeding need to be aware of what they eat and drink since things can be passed to the baby through the breast milk. Just as during pregnancy, breastfeeding women should avoid fish that is high in mercury.

Even a small amount of alcohol can be passed to baby through breast milk. A good rule is to wait at least 2 hours after a single alcoholic drink before breastfeeding. In addition, caffeine intake should be kept to 1 to 3 cups of regular coffee per day. Caffeine may cause problems such as restlessness and irritability in some babies. Be sure to discuss these issues with your health care provider or lactation consultant.



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MEDICAL CONDITIONS

HIV or AIDS or other medical conditions that involve chemotherapy or treatment with certain medications may make breastfeeding unsafe. Check with your health care provider or a lactation consultant if you have a specific condition and are unsure if you should breastfeed. Remember, you should always check with your health care provider about the safety of taking medications while breastfeeding, including over-the-counter and herbal medicines.

BREAST SURGERY

Women who've had breast surgery, may have difficulty with milk supply if their milk ducts have been severed. In this situation, talk with your health care provider about your concerns and work with a lactation specialist.

