

How partners can support breastfeeding and bond with their baby



Key facts

Breastfeeding is only one part of parenting.

There are many ways to bond with a baby beyond feeding.

Learning to breastfeed can take time, often 1 to 2 months to establish a routine.

Babies may feed up to 12 times a day, with sessions lasting over an hour.

Support from a partner can make a significant difference in the breastfeeding journey.

In This Article

What should I know about breastfeeding?

How can I help my partner?

What can I do when they're breastfeeding?

How can I get to know my baby?

My partner is having breastfeeding problems. How can I help?

Tools and Assistance

What should I know about breastfeeding?

Breastmilk contains all the essential nutrients a baby needs for the first six months of life, along with antibodies that help protect against illness and infections. Breastfeeding also has health benefits for the parent.

Breastfeeding is not always quick-newborns typically feed 8 to 12 times a day, with each session lasting from 10 minutes to over an hour.

Some discomfort is normal at the beginning of breastfeeding, but if pain persists beyond 30 to 60 seconds, it may indicate that the baby is not latching properly. Pain is not normal, and support should be sought to address any issues. With the right help, most breastfeeding challenges can be managed successfully.

When a baby is fussy, they may be soothed more easily by another caregiver, as the smell of milk on the breastfeeding parent can trigger their instinct to feed.

It usually takes 1 to 2 months to establish a solid breastfeeding routine. At that point, expressing breast milk may be an option to allow someone else to help with feedings.

How can I help my partner?

Supporting a partner with breastfeeding can boost their confidence and help them continue for longer.

Ways to offer support include:

Being present as much as possible to assist with household tasks.

Offering practical help during breastfeeding, such as bringing water, a pillow, or anything else needed.

Preparing healthy meals and encouraging hydration, as breastfeeding increases hunger and thirst.

Breastfeeding and intimacy

It's important to be patient if a partner does not feel like being intimate.

Constant feeding, carrying, and settling a baby can leave them feeling "touched

out."

What can I do when they're breastfeeding?

During breastfeeding sessions, a partner can:

Sit and talk with them.

Prepare meals.

Care for other children.

Complete other necessary tasks.

Night feeds

For night feedings, a partner can:

Bring the baby to the breastfeeding parent.

Burp the baby after the feed.

Change the baby's nappy.

Settle the baby back to sleep.

How can I get to know my baby?

Bonding with a baby is important, and love is communicated in many ways beyond feeding.

Ways to connect with a baby include:

Changing nappies.

Playing together.

Bathing them.

Giving gentle massages.

Cuddling them to sleep.

Carrying a baby in a sling or cuddling skin-to-skin can also help with bonding and provide comfort.

My partner is having breastfeeding problems. How can I help?

If a partner experiences breastfeeding difficulties, encouraging them to seek support can be helpful. Most issues can be resolved with the right guidance. A lactation consultant can provide specialized support if needed.

If breastfeeding proves too difficult or is not the preferred choice, alternative feeding options include:

Partial breastfeeding \ (combining breastmilk and formula).

Expressing breast milk for bottle feeding.

Formula feeding if necessary.

Where can I get more information and support?

While a partner may not be able to breastfeed, their support is crucial in making the process smoother. Learning about breastfeeding and offering encouragement can make a significant difference.

Taking things one day at a time and working as a team helps both the breastfeeding parent and the baby adjust.

Tools and Assistance

Connect with a lactation consultant or child health nurse.

Access community breastfeeding support groups.

Explore resources on responsive feeding and bonding.