Contact

If mum is experiencing problems with breastfeeding, she should contact her health visitor, midwife or infant feeding co-ordinator.

Helplines

National Breastfeeding Helpline
0300 100 0212

NCT Breastfeeding Helpline
0300 330 0771

La Leche League Helpline
0845 120 2918

Association of Breastfeeding Mothers
08444 122 949

You’ll also find information on the NHS Choices website www.nhs.uk
and at www.nhs.uk/start4life

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A grandmother's guide to breastfeeding.

These days, more and more new mums choose to breastfeed their babies. If your daughter or your son's partner decides to breastfeed her baby, you will have a really important role to play in supporting her and ensuring that she is able to feed your grandchild successfully.

Breastfeeding really does give your grandchild the best possible start in life and it's good for mum's health too:

- it provides your grandchild with natural protection from infections and diseases like diarrhoea, vomiting and chest infections
- breastfed babies are less likely to be obese or to develop eczema
- it saves time and money - formula and equipment can be expensive and there's no washing up or sterilising involved
- breastfeeding can help mums to develop a strong bond with their babies
- women who breastfeed have a lower risk of breast and ovarian cancer

How can grandparents help?

Grandparents naturally look forward to having a new grandchild.

A new mother will need to spend much of her time nursing, so an offer to do some cooking, cleaning or shopping may be very welcome.

One of the most supportive things grandparents can do is listen. New parents can have concerns or worries. It's sometimes helpful to listen with interest, without giving answers or advice.

If mum is struggling with breastfeeding, encourage her to get the help and support she needs from her health visitor or infant feeding adviser. Most new mums take time to learn how to breastfeed and often find that specialist support and advice allows them to continue successfully.

Always remember that by supporting mum to breastfeed you really are making an investment in the future health of your grandchild.

Some hints and tips on breastfeeding.

The daily routine of a breastfed baby can be very different from the routine of a formula-fed baby. It's useful to know what to expect so that you can offer mum the support and reassurance she needs to carry on feeding your grandchild successfully.

Breastfed babies tend to feed more often than formula-fed babies. Breast milk is perfect for babies and it's more easily digested than formula milk. As a result, breastfed babies tend to wake less often at night and continue feeding more often - between eight and 12 times in a 24-hour period.

Don't worry too much about a feeding routine. Breastfed babies need to feed little and often, sometimes even when they are very young. This is perfectly normal. Don't worry about getting them into a routine.

Worries about the baby getting enough milk

Because you can't see how much the baby is taking in, people often worry whether they are getting enough milk. The stomach of a newborn baby is about the size of a small marble and increases to the size of a walnut. Small, frequent feeds are perfect. Plenty of wet and dirty nappies are a good sign that they are getting what they need.

Some women do experience pain when breastfeeding. Pain can be a sign that the baby is not in the correct position for feeding. Encourage mum to speak to her health visitor or infant feeding adviser as soon as possible. They will be able help get things back on track.

Some women experience diarrhoea when breastfeeding. It's possible that the baby is not in the correct position for feeding. Encourage mum to speak to her health visitor or infant feeding adviser as soon as possible. They will be able help get things back on track.

Having strong views about breastfeeding

We all have our own views about breastfeeding, perhaps based on experience or the experience of those close to us. The main thing to remember is that breastfeeding is perfectly normal and natural and that most mums can succeed if they are given the right support. Try to respect the feelings of the new parents and not to put them under any pressure about their decision. Even if you don't agree with it yourself.

Some hints and tips on breastfeeding.

Don't worry if you're not sure what to do. It's not uncommon to feel a little uncomfortable around a breastfeeding mum, especially if this is new to you. When she begins feeding a baby, try not to make a drink while she positions and attaches baby to the breast in private. You will probably be surprised at how discreet breastfeeding can be.

Having a baby in the house can be challenging. When times are tough, new mums and babies can feel under pressure to switch to formula milk. Your support and encouragement at this time will be invaluable. Assure mum that things normally settle down as experience and confidence grow. Her health visitor or infant feeding adviser will be able to provide advice and support that could make all the difference.

It was lovely to see the bond between our daughter and her baby develop so quickly. And to see how the baby grew, developed and constantly gained weight purely from the nourishment of breast milk. We were able to help our granddaughter whenever needed, by caring for the baby if she wanted extra rest and doing the odd bit of housework. Now we have a very strong relationship with our grandchild.

As a grandmother, having breastfed both of my daughters, I was very proud when they decided to breastfeed their children. It's the most fulfilling experience to see them getting the best start in life. There are plenty of other enjoyable activities for us grandparents to help out with.

Serina, South Shields

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Myths and facts.

Myth 1: “It’s not that popular, only a few women do it in this country”
Fact: 78% of women in England start breastfeeding.

Myth 2: “Infant formula is basically the same as breast milk”
Fact: Infant formula isn’t the same as breast milk. It’s not a living product so it doesn’t have the antibodies, living cells, enzymes or hormones that protect your grandchild from infections and diseases later in life.

Myth 3: “People don’t like women breastfeeding in public”
Fact: Surveys actually show that the majority of people don’t mind women breastfeed in public at all. The more it’s done, the more normal it will become.

Myth 4: “Breastfeeding is easy for some women, but some don’t produce enough milk”
Fact: Almost all women are physically able to breastfeed. It’s a skill that every woman needs to learn and practise before it becomes easy. It happens more quickly for some women than others, but nearly all women can produce the amount of milk their baby needs.

Feeling uncomfortable around breastfeeding.

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