

“WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP A MOTHER BREASTFEED?”

Suggestions for Family Members and Friends

Feeding is not the only form of loving attention young babies need and understand. Love and comfort can come from others besides mother. Attention from others helps baby learn that people have different smells, sounds, shapes, and sizes.

- Support her decision (even if you have personal doubts about breastfeeding).
- Allow the new mother privacy when breastfeeding if she wants it.
- Do not question her milk supply. There is no surer way to make a new mother doubt her natural ability. She will have enough milk if she feeds the baby frequently because milk is produced on a supply and demand principle. The more she breastfeeds, the more milk she will make.
- Do not question how often she feeds the new baby. Breastmilk is absorbed more quickly and completely than artificial milk. Breastfed babies can have empty tummies in 90 minutes. Breastfed babies often “cluster feed” where they will nurse frequently for a few hours then settle to a longer sleep.
- Support the new father by encouraging him to find ways other than feeding to get to know his baby. Changing, bathing, holding, rocking, talking or singing to the baby can help the two become bonded.
- Increase your understanding of breastfeeding by reading or watching videos and share useful tips with her.
- Cook the mother a nutritious meal.
- Relieve her for a few hours by caring for her older children.
- Do the laundry, cleaning, grocery shopping, or other housework.
- Hold, cuddle, rock, walk, bathe, change, and play with baby. Give the new mother an opportunity to rest.
- Be understanding – taking care of a baby is time-consuming. She may not be able to spend as much time with you as she used to, but your support/friendship counts nonetheless.