

How Partners Can Help With Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding

When a mother is breastfeeding, it may seem that you may have little or no role to play in infant feeding. This is not true! A supportive partner is very important to the success of breastfeeding. Your partner and your baby need your support. Here are specific ways that you can help.

Learn About Breastfeeding

- Read the material your partner brings home from her health care provider.
- Talk to other families who have breastfed or are breastfeeding their babies.
- Learn about an effective latch. You can see parts of the latch that she can't.
 - Your baby should open his or her mouth wide (like a yawn).
 - Your baby's lips should be pushed out, like fish lips.
 - Most of the areola should be in your baby's mouth.

Be Ready to Give Love and Encouragement

- New mothers often doubt their abilities, including their ability to breastfeed. When your partner feels discouraged or weepy, give her some encouragement.

- Your baby's second night (and sometimes third and fourth) can often be the most stressful for mom and baby.
 - Babies tend to be very awake and want to eat often. Sometimes it feels like baby is eating all night. Reassure mom that this is normal.
 - When baby isn't eating, you can snuggle him or her close to help him or her fall into a deep sleep. This will allow mom to sleep until the next feeding.
- Tell her you have faith in her.
- Encourage her to sit or lie down and get some rest.
- Let her know you understand that being a mother is a big adjustment.
- Call your hospital's lactation resource if you have breastfeeding concerns.

Actively Support Her

- Family members and friends may make remarks or ask questions that undermine your partner's confidence in her ability to feed your baby.

Step forward and respond to these comments so she doesn't have to. Explain that this is a decision you have both made and how important it is to you. Make positive comments about how well your baby is growing and thriving.

- Bring her pillows and then hold your baby while she gets settled in a comfortable position.

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- Bring her something to drink to help her get enough liquids.
- Burp and walk your baby after he or she has nursed on one side and before he or she starts on the other.
- If your baby falls asleep, carry him or her to his or her crib.
- Get up at night and bring your partner the baby so she can remain resting in bed.
- If your baby takes an occasional bottle of breastmilk, be the one who gives it to him or her.