

DADS AND PARTNERS: TOOLKIT FOR SUPPORTING BREASTFEEDING



Dads and partners are one of the most important supporters for mum and baby. What you do during the early weeks – even the simple actions – can really help your partner reach their breastfeeding goals. Take a look at this leaflet for tips to support breastfeeding.

How to Support Breastfeeding

1. Get clued-up about breastfeeding

Learning more about how babies feed can help you and your partner feel less worried about breastfeeding.

Breastmilk is designed to be digested quickly, and you should expect your baby to feed 8 – 12 times in a 24 hour period, including at night. Frequent feeding is what helps your partner produce more breastmilk, so it's important to breastfeed whenever your partner or baby wants. Some parents worry that their baby is not getting enough breastmilk, as their baby always seems hungry. But frequent feeding is exactly how babies feed. It doesn't mean they are not getting enough milk.

You can tell if your baby is getting enough milk by their weight gain, their behaviour, and by paying attention to their nappy. From day 10, expect at least 6 wet and heavy nappies in a 24 hour period, and 2 pooey nappies a day for the first 4-6 weeks. At around 6 weeks, some babies may go several days without pooing, and this is normal as long as the poo is soft and baby is gaining weight. Breastfed babies are rarely constipated. If you have any concerns, contact your Health Visitor.

It's important to remember that every baby is different, and babies are always growing and changing. Sometimes your baby might nurse for five minutes, other times they may nurse for 45 mins. When babies have growth spurts, they usually need to nurse longer or more frequently for a few days.

To learn more about breastfeeding, see: <https://www.breastfeeding-network.org.uk/>

Did You Know? Breastfeeding Facts

1. Breastmilk is full of antibodies to fight bugs and viruses – so if your baby gets sick, they tend to recover quicker.
2. Breastmilk adapts to your baby's needs, including more water in hot weather and sleep-inducing hormones at night.
3. Breastmilk also feeds healthy gut bacteria. A healthy gut microbiome is important for better health.
4. Responsive breastfeeding is protective for your baby, and helps lower the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

2. Encourage & support to your partner

Looking after a new baby is often a life-changing responsibility. It's important for you and your partner to support one another, especially during the difficult times. Remember to offer words of encouragement when they're needed most - those small gestures can make all the difference on the hardest days.

During the newborn period, your partner will be breastfeeding very frequently – so it really helps if dads and partners are in charge of things like shopping, cooking, and cleaning. When your partner is breastfeeding, see if they want some water, a snack, or a pillow. If you have other children, play with them so your partner can focus on breastfeeding. While these seem like small acts, they really help!

Attend appointments together to learn together. Learn about different breastfeeding positions and how babies latch, so you can help your partner when they need.

3. Bond with your baby without feeding

Since newborn babies spend most of their time breastfeeding or sleeping, you may feel like there's not much you can do... but there are lots of ways you can bond with your baby:

- When your baby has been fed, it's your turn to take over! Hold your baby close and rub their back (breastfed babies don't always burp, but they enjoy the cuddle!)
- Place your baby on your bare chest for skin-to-skin contact, which is soothing and comforting for your baby
- Bathe your baby and try some baby massage
- Once your baby is fed, pop out together with your baby for a walk
- Read, sing songs, or simply talk to baby: your baby will grow to recognise and love the sound of your voice
- Change nappies!

1st time parents? Join the Merton baby massage course and meet other new parents. Search "ELT Baby Merton" online, or go to: <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/elt-baby-894759>



Getting Support

Breastfeeding is a skill, and it can take time for mum and baby to establish breastfeeding. If you and your partner feel breastfeeding is not going as well as you'd hoped, or if you would just like someone to check that things are going well, make sure you reach out to get support.

Breastfeeding Support:

- Breastfeeding Drop-in Support Group (no booking required, term time only):
 - o Mon, 10.30am-12pm, Acacia Children's Centre, CR4 1SD
 - o Thurs, 12.30pm-2pm, Lower Morden Children's Centre, SM4 4QU
- Merton Health Visiting Breastfeeding Support: Wednesdays, 1-4pm, Church Road Children's Centre, CR4 3LS. Speak to your Health Visitor or call 0330 053 9264 to book.
- Merton Health Visiting Specialist Breastfeeding Clinic: Mondays. Referrals from health care professionals.
- National Breastfeeding Helpline (24hrs): 0300 100 0212

Scan Me →
**Merton Infant
Feeding Information
and Support**



If you are unsure about anything to do with your baby's health, you should contact your Midwife, Health Visitor or GP. The Health Visitor Service is also for dads and partners, even if you are not all living together.