

Breastfeeding and your baby



Partners and support people

The transition to parenthood is very rewarding, but for some it can be quite challenging for both yourself and your partner. There are many things you can do to support and protect your partner and new baby as they are learning to breastfeed. Your role is different but just as important.

Why learn about breastfeeding?

Learning about breastfeeding is part of being supportive and informed and can make breastfeeding more successful. Remember that each new baby brings a different experience.

Why support breastfeeding?

- Breast milk provides all the nutrients your baby needs
- Breast milk reduces the risk of many diseases
- Breast milk is easier for your baby to digest
- Breastfeeding has health benefits for your partner and baby
- Breastfeeding is free and convenient

If breastfeeding is difficult, your support is especially important.



How long can my partner breastfeed?

Your partner and baby can breastfeed for as long as they would like to. Current research recommends that you:

- Feed your baby only breast milk for around the first 6 months of life
- Introduce solids around 6 months of age

How can partners get involved?

Your confidence and relationship with your baby will grow as you care for them. Being involved can reduce what some partners describe as 'feeling left out'. You can:

- Cuddle, sing, play, read, talk to and soothe your baby
- Change your baby's nappy or bath your baby
- Lay your baby on your chest ('skin to skin')
- Carry your baby in a sling or go for a walk in the pram

How can a partner provide support?

Share the experience:

- Talk, ask questions, read and attend ante/post natal classes.
- Learn together about breastfeeding and the changes in your life.

Give emotional support:

- Let your partner know that they are doing a great job.
- Acknowledge challenges and offer gentle positive encouragement.

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Provide practical support:

- Be involved with your baby and
- Support everyday activities such as cooking, cleaning, shopping and washing.
- Your partner will need time to rest for physical recovery after the birth.
- Offer your partner plenty of water and nutritious snacks.

Look after yourself:

- If you feel stressed or are having trouble adjusting to your new role, consider speaking with a health professional or your GP.

Communicate:

- Spend time talking with your partner about things that happen during the day.
- If you feel comfortable, share your experience about breastfeeding with other dads, partners, close friends or family.

Understand what to expect:

- It's normal to experience tiredness, sleep disturbance and a change in your sex life.
- Some days will be filled with joy and other days may be overwhelming.
- Speak with a health professional or your GP if any of the above are worrying you

Tips for close friends, relatives, and grandparents

Your experiences and opinions are valuable. Try to:

- Give positive and encouraging comments
- Listen and be responsive
- Offer practical support such as caring for other children, housework and making meals
- Learn about breastfeeding – what you know may have changed
- Respect the decisions of the parents



How can I find more information?

Phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maternal and Child Health - Early Pregnancy and Parenting support line (02) 5124 1775, or• Central Health Intake (CHI) on (02) 5124 9977
Website	Understanding your baby information video, available here: https://www.canberrahealthservices.act.gov.au/services-and-clinics/services/understanding-your-baby-information-session-mach <ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.health.act.gov.au/breastfeeding• www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au
Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make an appointment for assessment and ongoing breastfeeding information and support on (02) 5124 1775• Your GP

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Acknowledgement of Country



Canberra Health Services acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people. Canberra Health Services respects their continuing culture and connections to the land and the unique contributions they make to the life of this area. Canberra Health Services also acknowledges and welcomes Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples who are part of the community we serve.



Accessibility (how to get this information in other ways)

If you want to receive this information:

in larger print

or hear it in audio

please telephone (02) 5124 0000.

If you need translating and interpreting service – please telephone 131 450.

National Relay Service phone 133 677 then ask for 133 427.

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