



Top Ten Breastfeeding Take-Home Points

1. Human milk is the perfect food for human babies

Shift thinking from “best feeding” to “normal feeding”. Human milk is the birthright of human babies! Breastfeeding has countless health advantages for mother and baby! If a baby needs to be fed anything other than mother’s own milk, it should be medically necessary and the risks vs. benefits of any supplemental option should be discussed with the parents.

2. The birth matters

Your birth impacts breastfeeding (medications, trauma, fluids, placenta issues, excessive bleeding, etc.) can all have an impact. Know how interventions can affect breastfeeding and your newborn. Don’t underestimate the power skin to skin contact after delivery and seek IBCLC (International Board Certified Lactation Consultant) help asap if feeding issues arise after delivery.

3. Your baby is a mammal

Despite all our technology, we keep having stone-age babies! A mother’s body is her baby’s habitat during pregnancy and beyond. Keep your baby close, feed often. Repeat. When in doubt remember, “WWMD: What Would Mammals Do?”

4. Feed early and often

“I just fed him, he can’t be hungry again!” Oh yes he can! Baby’s full time job is to grow. Catch their early hunger cues for successful feeds, prepare for cluster feeds and watch the baby not the clock! If there are any weight gain/growth concerns for baby, talk to an IBCLC asap.

5. Breastfeeding shouldn’t hurt

We won’t lie...some moms experience tenderness in the early days but real, toe-curling pain that doesn’t let up is *not* normal. If you have any cracking, bleeding, intense discomfort or are not enjoying feeds talk to an IBCLC right away. Latch/positioning, baby/mom’s anatomy, infection, milk flow, etc are all fixable causes of pain.

6. Latch: Everything old is new again

Over the years many latch techniques have been devised, books have been written and yet...just a disclaimer...your baby hasn’t read those books! Consider time honored positions that are baby-led, laid back and comfy. A comfy mama and fully supported baby with a wide open mouth is a good recipe for comfy, effective breastfeeding. Get support if feeding is not comfy for you or your baby.



7. Babies don't manipulate, adults can

Your baby's needs are valid. Your baby doesn't try to trick you into nursing/cuddling/holding them more, they actually need those things to thrive! Hormone of stress (cortisol) blocks hormone of love (oxytocin) and can impact brain development. Choosing to respond to your baby's needs is a healthy response to their normal, biological cues. Strict schedules, crying it out methods, etc can be harmful to your baby but you can never love them too much!

8. Got milk?

#1 cause of premature weaning is concern about milk supply. So how do the milk factories work? Demand and supply! Frequent, effective milk removal tells your breasts to keep making more milk. If you have true supply concerns or someone is telling you to supplement with formula, call an IBCLC to explore all your options.

9. Breastfeeding is a part of life

"Don't take while pregnant or breastfeeding" is the disclaimer on most everything these days and breastfeeding moms can feel unnecessarily limited in their food, medication and lifestyle choices. When in doubt ask a lactation specialist. Similarly breastfeeding moms may talk about feeling "tied down" or embarrassed to nurse in public. Babies are portable and their right to eat anywhere anytime is protected by law in most states. Working moms can also continue to meet their breastfeeding goals with good support. Life does change when you have a baby, but breastfeeding can make it easier, not harder.

10. Don't wait to get quality help!

Sore? Worried? Uncertain? If any of these statement describe how you are feeling about breastfeeding then get quality help right away! What is quality help? Not all breastfeeding help is equal. Sometimes some mother to mother support is all a mom needs to get things on track and other times she really needs some comprehensive clinical support. At times when clinical support is needed, make sure you are being supported by a board certified lactation consultant (IBCLC). Just like you'd "shop around" for a dentist, doctor, doula or midwife, make sure you "click" with the lactation consultant you are working with. Quality lactation support is always cheaper than the option of not breastfeeding. (Seriously, a month of formula can set you back \$200-\$300 not to mention the long term health costs, etc). Breastfeeding is the best investment in your child that you will ever make!



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