


Submission no. 410AUTHORISED: 20/6/07 **Subject:** Feeding story

Hi,

I have a 35 month old son and a 9 month old son. I live in rural North QLD (Innsfail). I had trouble breastfeeding both children. With my first son I had trouble getting him to attach properly as I had flat nipples. He had a very vigorous suck and my nipples quickly became damaged. Each feed was torture - I had cracked and bleeding nipples. I stayed in hospital for 5 nights in an effort to get breastfeeding going well. I had a lot of help from the midwives, however found that each midwife gave different and sometimes conflicting advice. For example, one midwife would say use a nipple shield and cream and the next would say never use a nipple shield. I found that most midwives would try and put the baby on the breast themselves rather than demonstrating to me the correct way. Just before leaving hospital I had a visit from a midwife who happened to be a lactation consultant and her advice was helpful, although different to the previous advice I had received. I left the hospital feeling very confused and rather alone in this brand new world of babies and breastfeeding.

After spending many hours reading posts on the ABA website and posting my own questions I felt slightly better about the situation. Thankfully my husband was very supportive and this helped immensely. I persevered for six weeks of pain before my nipples healed and breastfeeding became much easier. I phoned several ABA counsellors during this time and their advice was invaluable. I went on to breastfeed my son for 20 months.

When I became pregnant with my second child I put a lot of thought into the upcoming birth but never did I think that I would have trouble breastfeeding again. During one of my clinic visits I was informed that I would see a lactation consultant during one of my visits and that there was a new project which included home visits by a midwife after the birth. Apparently the funding for this project was cut whilst I was pregnant so neither of these things occurred.

The birth went smoothly and my son was placed straight on my chest and was able to feed straight away. It did not feel good and when he came off the breast it was bleeding. Again I had troubles attaching him to the breast. Again I had lots of conflicting advice, however several of the midwives had been to breastfeeding training and those that had were very helpful. One midwife (who hadn't undertaken the breastfeeding training), helped me attach my baby and even though he was obviously only sucking on the nipple and causing me pain, was adamant that he was on correctly. She then tried to force me to feed in a position that I did not feel at all comfortable with. This experience was quite traumatic and made me not want to ask any of the midwives for further advice. I left hospital after 5 nights and the breastfeeding was still not going well. Each feed made me scream with pain. Again my husband was very supportive and if it was not for him I would not have persevered. There was no lactation consultant available to make an appointment

5/06/2007

with, however I was able to go back to the hospital to see the midwife who was a lactation consultant when she was on her shift. Unfortunately she only worked night shift so this meant I made two trips to the hospital at 5am in the morning in order to see her. It took six weeks before the breastfeeding was bearable and I am still breastfeeding my son. I plan to feed him until he is at least 20 months and maybe longer.

The things that I feel would help mothers breastfeed are:

- A) Ensure that the section on breastfeeding in antenatal classes isn't all about how great breastfeeding is for a child. Ensure that pregnant mothers are aware that there can be difficulties and make sure they know all resources available and who to go to for help if they have trouble feeding
- B) Ensure midwives are fully trained in breastfeeding
- C) Ensure that midwives who are not trained in breastfeeding DO NOT give breastfeeding advice to new mothers
- D) Ensure that the advice given by the midwives to breastfeeding mothers is CONSISTENT
- E) Provide funding for each hospital to have a lactation consultant available for all pregnant women and new mothers
- F) Provide funding for home visits to new mothers in the days after they leave hospital to ensure breastfeeding is going well

I hope this is useful to you. If you have any further queries please don't hesitate to contact me as I am passionate about the benefits of breastfeeding.

My name and address is (please do not publish these details):