

**Submission no. 402**  
AUTHORISED: 20/6/07 *h*

**Subject:** Difficulty breastfeeding

Good afternoon,

My name is Margaret and my son Liam was born August 2005. He was 2 weeks early, because he was breech and had to be a caeser. Funnily enough, my milk did not come in until his due date, 2 weeks after he was delivered.

I found it very difficult to sit upright to breastfeed after having this operation. It was painful, putting weight on the area. I even used special pillows and I was still uncomfortable and very unrelaxed! The only way I could breastfeed was to lay on my side. Now we all know that doesn't really do much for the flow of milk, for gravity reasons.

I also felt very pressured by the hospital, especially since my baby was jaundiced. It was critical that he get my milk, to help with the jaundice. What incredible pressure I was under. He was the second baby with jaundice in the hospital at the time, but not as bad as the first. So we had to weight for the special humidicrib thing with the light (can't remember what it's called). Then I had the stress of having to watch him, in this contraption of a machine, because they were short staffed!! And they could NOT find the mask to put over his eyes, to protect them, so he wouldn't be blinded by the light!! They fitted gauze around his little head, that kept moving. I had to keep an eye on him and move the gauze back 24/7 for at least 4 days!! Way too stressfull!!

Formula was introduced into the regime, and I was expressing my milk after every breastfeed (ie. every 2 hours) My baby had lost more than 10% of his body weight. I have never felt so inadequate in my life. Who can rest and recuperate if feeding every 2 hours 24/7? Bub was so tired and kept falling asleep on the boob. That's why he wouldn't drink. It was insane. Let alone the Lactating Consultant/Maternal Health Nurse that came to my home after we took him home and he still wasn't gaining weight and spoke to me like I was a child and made me feel like I was killing my baby! Maybe if he had received treatment for his jaundice straight away, rather than waiting for his turn, we wouldn't have had so much trouble.

I eventually spoke to the other Maternal Health Nurse, whom I knew personally and I suggested, letting bub sleep longer and letting my boobs get more milk. So we tried 3 hourly feeding 24/7. And continued topping up with formula. A week later I saw the health nurse at the shops and she said, "My God! What are you feeding him? Steak and Eggs?" Because he was putting on weight. I had to keep a record of his peeing, pooing and feeds for weeks. By the way, the staff at Mansfield District Hospital were incredibly helpful to the best of their ability and available resources, except for the b\_tch Lactation Consultant. I look forward to having my next child there again.

He hasn't had any problems since that change to hourly feeds. He stated solids at 4.5 months and still has his bottle of cow's milk at night. He's 21 months old and is in the top 10% of boys for height and weight.

Now as far as I'm concerned - After six weeks of breastfeeding, perhaps because of the drain on my body and the fact that hormones change at that point, my Ulcerative

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Colitis/Crohns became active again. It had been fine since week 9 of the pregnancy. I became very sick and by 9 weeks after the birth, I had developed "tricky finger" (RSI) in both my hands/thumbs from a manual breast pump. Bub was asking for milk every hour and a half if I breastfed only and gave no formula. I went to the doctor, and took cortisone short-term for my hands. It didn't do much, but in the process gave breastfeeding away. I was so relieved! I did not feel like a failure, because my son was thriving.

I later read, that Crohns is related to Bovine Johnes disease, and that these cows have trouble breastfeeding feeding their young, due to the disease, they don't produce enough milk. Mmm, sounds strangely familiar.

Anyway, I know that if we are blessed with another baby one day. I will say my piece once only at the hospital. That I will try to breastfeed and it won't be 2 hourly, it'll be at least 3 hourly. If my baby is struggling to put on weight or not thriving I will request that formula be introduced to supplement. I am also going to try nipple protectors whether they like it or not. It's my body!! I am also going to buy an electric breastpump and later donate it to the hospital if they will accept it. When I get home after a week, because I know it would be another caeser, I would probably follow the same regime I did with the first baby, unless he/she wants to sleep a bit longer. I will go with the flow. If I have enough breastmilk, then that will be a blessing. If I do not, I'm not going to get stressed and have a cow about it. No pun intended!

Kinds Regards,

Margaret Christopher