

Subject: Breastfeeding submission

Hi. I just wanted to pass on my experience with breastfeeding.

I'm a 30 year old first time Mum and attended a class before my baby was born. I was fully aware of the issues and difficulties involved with breastfeeding so knew of the challenges when my son was born. We encountered trouble from the very start.

I went to the Francis Perry private hospital in Melbourne. The midwives encouraged us to call them down for every breastfeed so they could supervise and help. But every time I pressed the buzzer, I got a different midwife and every midwife had a different way to do it. It completely stressed us out and my husband became very angry when he was walking past the nurses station one day and saw a big sign instructing midwives to teach a UNIFORM technique.

Our release day came along and I still hadn't got it right. We went home and it was Good Friday and I had a complete meltdown. It was agony. I cried and screamed with pain through every feed. We couldn't get through to any support services or feeding consultants because of the Easter break and no one was going to be back until the Tuesday. I tried calling the hospital back but they were too busy and just advised me to get a breast pump and express.

Tuesday came around and I got into a free public breastfeeding support service. That helped but a day later the pain was worse than ever. I gave up and began weaning my baby onto formula at 2 weeks of age. It was the most stressful time I've ever been through, I felt like I had not bonded with my baby and I couldn't even cuddle him in between feeds because my breasts hurt too much. The guilt because of the public push for breastfeeding was overwhelming. I didn't feel like I'd failed as a mother because I couldn't breastfeed .. I felt like I'd failed because society was telling me I failed.

I strongly believe the problem was back in the hospital with so many different and conflicting instructions from all the different midwives.

Thanks for your time
Melissa.

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