

breastfeeding in public. My father was too embarrassed to be in the same room as me initially when I was breastfeeding. He now inquires as to whether my DS is still feeding from the boob and while he never says anything I can tell that he is starting to think that it is getting a bit unseemly and that DS is too old to be on the boob (at 7.5 months).

My mother is very supportive but when DS was going through a growth spurt and feeding a lot she came out with the lines "maybe you're not making enough milk" and "maybe your milk isn't of very good quality". Of course, they were the lines she was given back in the 70s. The classic four-hourly feed routine that our mothers learned is a problem I think - mums are trying to help their daughters but "don't know any better" which sounds horrible but I can't think of another way of putting it.

My DH was pushing hard for me to introduce formula just so I could have a break because everyone was telling us that DS would sleep better on formula.

Breasts are regarded as primarily sexual so I think that is a problem. I am amazed at how many people seem to think breastfeeding is primitive, or a bit "animal" or that some people seem to think it is a "toilet" function and that formula feeding is so much "cleaner" and more socially acceptable. I've wound up being far more "out there" about breastfeeding than I ever planned to, just with my own family. When they inquire about me feeding in public I'm at pains to demonstrate my discretion while saying at the same time that if someone was actually close enough to get a tiny glimpse of nipple before DS clamps on and were disturbed by that glimpse, then they were the ones with the problem, not me. (Said in such a way that they cannot do anything but nod in agreement because they know I'm right and won't admit that they feel confronted by it).

The wide availability of formula is also an issue. I always thought that you HAD to introduce formula at some point, that it was a vital part of the weaning process. I had no idea that formula wasn't actually necessary until I spoke to my MCHN.

The question is how to do this without the women who have no choice but to use formula don't feel marginalised at the same time. Every now and again I read an angry opinion piece by a woman about "breastfeeding nazis" and how her baby was losing too much weight etc etc and the bad advice the woman was given by midwives etc etc (which of course points back to something lacking in education, this time on the part of the midwives and MCHNs).

Someone else suggested education of teenagers which I think is a great idea because I honestly think part of the problem is societal. I also think that women having trouble establishing breastfeeding or wanting extra help should be able to stay in hospital a bit longer if they want to. This happened to me - I was kicked out on day 4 because the hospital wanted the private room and my milk supply had not come in properly so I ended up teaching myself to breastfeed. I felt so vulnerable leaving that day, I really really needed one more day in hospital.

**j'fiend**

May 23rd, 2007, 11:33 AM

Although I have selected one option (lack of continuity of care), I believe it is a combination of factors which create a barrier to breastfeeding.

To put my comments into context, I had no problems with attachment and milk supply. My daughter was happily sucking within 10 minutes of being born, and I am still breastfeeding her at 8 months. However, I was struck by the following:

- 1) The conflicting advice given by midwives at the private hospital I attended. Is there a reason why hospitals don't have a consistent approach to breastfeeding for their staff to follow? Some midwives were great. Some were a nightmare to deal with.
- 2) The insistence that if you are breastfeeding 'properly' it shouldn't hurt. The video I watched in BF classes boomed (in capital letters) that BF should be "comfortable, pain-free, and pleasurable". Well, yes, eventually it is. But starting off, no it's not! To tell women they shouldn't have ANY pain is quite unrealistic. I can't see how using a body part for the first time is going to be completely pain-free... and it is unfair to imply a new mother must be doing something wrong if she reports any discomfort when BF-ing her baby.
- 3) Other people's attitudes. A couple of male friends laughed incredulously when I mentioned such people as lactation consultants existed. Their simultaneous response was "Women have been BF for thousands of years! What new age nonsense is this?" (One man had adult children, the other didn't have any). Which brings me to an observation that others have already made: the emphasis on the word "natural": the implication that breastfeeding should be as easy as breathing or weeing. This is just setting up new mothers to feel like failures. Walking and eating are "natural" functions too, but it takes a little initial practice before anyone can perform either well.

**IK**

May 23rd, 2007, 11:36 AM

I can sense the dismay and almost-anger is some posters here, and I think it's important to say that I don't think anyone here is talking about women who cannot breastfeed for physiological or medication reasons. I am pretty sure we're talking about women who can otherwise breastfeed but give up for one or a combination of the reasons Kelly listed.

I find the 'nipple nazis' tend to be MCH nurses and vigilante midwives (who are notorious for conflicting advice) and the tag has somehow stuck to ABA, quite unfairly. I say unfairly because even the ABA forum, has a thread all about 'when breastfeeding doesn't work out'...how can you justifiably call ABA the 'nipple nazis' when they are real believers in 'breastfeeding is for baby, not baby is for breastfeeding'? If there is no breastfeeding, baby has to eat something else!

As someone who used the phone twice during my initial attachment problems, I have to say that you need to know that there are lactation consultants available. The second time I called someone I realised that my particular problem needed to be seen in person, because according to the 'instructions' I was doing everything right. I was right in the end - it was not my fault, it was DS's tongue tie! Definitely a visual diagnosis, unless someone has the foresight to ask 'can your child stick his or her tongue out over the gumline?'...which no-one thought to ask. But I persevered because I knew that once I did that, it would be fine. As much as I didn't have the anecdotes before DS was born, afterwards I was surrounded by women who would swear to me that 'it just clicks and gets better' (for attachment problems) and I trusted that implicitly to get me through.

**Jelvie**

May 23rd, 2007, 11:38 AM

I voted lack of education, but just as easily could have voted for conflicting advice after birth.

**rayray**

May 23rd, 2007, 11:43 AM

Not only did I have a bad experience with a midwife with my second baby which made me feel crap about myself for days, but I was then also excluding from the mothers group because I was a non breastfeeding mother. Thats awful, was this by the other mums? Its never OK to discriminate against someone because they either are or are not breastfeeding.

**DASH**

May 23rd, 2007, 11:44 AM

I chose lack of support, because I think it is an ongoing issue.

Breastfeeding is totally natural, but people don't realise that natural does not mean instinctive and it has to be learned.


For example, walking is the totally natural and normal way for human beings to get around. But we don't expect babies to be able to do it, we know that it is something they have to learn and develop the skills for, and we support them in that. We know that they are going to have problems and hurt themselves, and we pick them up and cuddle them. They may even get scared and refuse to do it for a while. But no-one says to them, "It's alright, you had a go and it didn't work out. Just use a wheelchair, it's practically the same." This is what happens to so many Mums who then feel guilty because they have "failed" at breastfeeding, when in reality it was other people who failed them by not supporting them.

And just as there are some people who genuinely cannot walk, there are women who genuinely cannot breastfeed. If they were given ongoing support this may be picked up, rather than putting them through months of trying and all the worry of poor weight gains.

Deb

**Liz**

May 23rd, 2007, 11:45 AM

 A couple of male friends laughed incredulously when I mentioned such people as lactation consultants existed. Their simultaneous response was "Women have been BF for thousands of years! What new age nonsense is this?"

Well, it's true really :) BUT in all those years, women had community and family support, mothers would educate daughters, if not, then an aunty or a neighbour in the community, or whatever. They would even feed each others babies when there were problems. These days sadly we DO need lactation consultants, because the culture of breastfeeding has slipped out the window, and big corporations have come up with an alternative which is all too readily available. So the importance of breastfeeding and encouragement to persevere have taken a back seat.

**gobblygook**

May 23rd, 2007, 11:49 AM

I would say all!

I have also heard that some women find it hard because they want to go out and stay social but want privacy and modesty is a concern when in public so that stops them.

Education as always is key.

I have breastfed 3 babies over 7 years and I still feel there is more to learn. Experience is important - how can you learn about something that you haven't experienced?

**Lelepoppysmummy**

May 23rd, 2007, 11:51 AM

Hi,

I found that my sister-in-law and myself are the only one out of 14 people we knew having babies at the same time that are still BF! I am always asked when I'm going to stop and told that it would make life easier... Who's life? I don't have any problems at all with feeding my little angel and she still likes at least one night feed. I'm not sure why friends tell me to stop when they are the ones getting up at 2am to feed. When in hospital, I also had the same problem as many others... Every different midwife would give different advice. I had a HUGE amount of milk and VERY fast letdown and one midwife thrust my daughter face into my rock hard breast and the poor little thing almost drowned in milk. They offered no help at all! One night when she was crying because my milk had come in and she was getting used to it, the midwives just took her off of me and told me to go back to bed... they would sort her out. I felt totally useless and felt like a failure. I wasn't helped or told how to help her. So I ended up leaving the next day on the 3rd day after a c-section. I felt more comfortable at home to try and work through it on my own. I had mastitis quite a few times and my cracked bleeding nipples lasted for over 12 weeks. I used nipple shields, even though they are not recommended. I would try every 4th feed or so not to, but it was too painful. I worked through it and even with the problems I had I am SO happy I stuck with it now. She is 7 months now and a very happy and healthy child.

I also find people telling me I don't have enough milk because she's getting hungrier... Don't babies get hungrier as they grow?... as they start to move?... as they start to crawl?...

I'm glad I did what I felt was best for HER!

**JenSam**

May 23rd, 2007, 11:57 AM

I had a lot of interventions with my son's birth, as a result I needed medication to help my milk come in - during this time he has had to be supplemented with formula to satisfy him. There are always extenuating circumstances to why some babies can't be purely breastfed - it would be nice at this highly emotional time for a new mum to gain support for whatever her decisions are, as sometimes, there are external factors. I would love to only breastfeed, I am persevering with breastfeeding as I love the connection it brings between my son and I, but I will not let him be unhappy or go hungry if this is not enough. So more support for any decision.

**neeny**

May 23rd, 2007, 12:01 PM

I would like to add that I mentioned my reason because it wasn't listed as a voting option. Not angry at all! no need to be shot down in flames and I don't think this forum is for people who only Breastfeed or had ongoing problems. The topic does say "no matter how you feed your baby.. vote!"

**HotMumma**

May 23rd, 2007, 12:03 PM

I voted for lack of education, but I would have liked to have voted for intervention too. I found from the section I didn't want to eat hardly any food so there for my milk did not come in. I also hardly drank, but no one told me about that either.

**Phoenix**

May 23rd, 2007, 12:04 PM

There are so many things that don't help mothers continue breastfeeding. I think as a whole it is society's perception of breastfeeding that is a mother's biggest barrier. Breastfeeding while natural is not seen as normal. Mothers today rarely handle a baby before birth and most have never seen a baby being breastfed. We lack the family support networks we had decades ago. Back before formula was marketed mothers had friends and family who came around and did stuff and helped the mother so all she had to do was learn to breastfeed. The mother had on one hand a wealth of knowledge to help the mother through any problems. This is where I feel ABA fits in. Mothers are able to access groups while pregnant and observe mothers breastfeeding, once baby is born they have other mothers who can sympathise and offer advice and trained counsellors who can help out. But the ABA can't help if the mothers don't know about them and this is hard when they receive limited funding.

Health professionals not having up to date information is a big problem. Most of them have only done a few hours of breastfeeding learning while in medical school so their knowledge is made up of past experiences with patients, or themselves/or wives and most terribly from formula companies whose only interest is getting the sales.

If you read through any of the submissions already made to the parliamentary enquiry you will see that between the mothers and the professionals that have submitted the answers are relatively the same. Lack of support, lack of education from others (let's face it most pregnant women are bombarded with BF info) and also mothers not being correctly informed of the health issues that can occur from formula.

I think also a big thing that affects BF is peoples perception of formula. I know there are women that cannot physically or even from pyscological reasons cannot breastfeed, however there are many women who choose before birth or after a few weeks to feed formula. Quite often these mothers are under the false impression that formula is the same or better then breastmilk, and a lot of time this is told to them by health professionals. Formula is too readily available for mothers in those difficult times. And despite saying on the tin to consult a HP before using many women just buy it form the grocery store without even talking it over with anyone.

There is now 300 submissions on the website and some really good suggestions (many that have been made on here) on what the government can do. Lets hope they do it ASAP. It is estimated that the cost of premature weaning of infants at 3 mths costs the government \$290 million per year (source the NHMRC) imagine what could be done with that money.

**231203jack**

May 23rd, 2007, 12:05 PM

I have a not been able to breastfeed either of my children for terribly long. The first was 3 weeks and the second less than a week! Both were c sections and all the ideas in the world have been thrown at me as to this being a reason for my inability to breast feed. Nos 1 son and I had huge attachment issues and I remember sitting there in a state crying as he was brought to me for a feed...every time! When I made the decision to go to the bottle with Nos 2 I was so scared of telling anyone the judgements made by friends and family were too much to handle! The second time around I still felt judged regardless of what my situatiion and feelings were. I still get upset at people bangingon about breast is best and those who are so into it and doing it successfully and good on them but spare a thought for those who do struggle! I think people need to be more aware of the effect their words can have on others even unintentionally. But hey I am sure I am guilty myself! It is all a journey of learning for ones self!

**Nelle**

May 23rd, 2007, 12:07 PM

Just flying in and out - while there are many factors, I think it's mainly education, if you know why you're breastfeeding and all the benefits, then you KNOW why it's worth persevering through hard times, you KNOW whether you need to supplement with formula or not, you KNOW it's your right to breastfeed wherever you want, you KNOW it's normal and boobs are actually for a baby's nourishment, and not just simply nice looking accessories.

And other people KNOW that what you're doing is feeding a baby, big deal.

It's said that knowledge is power, and I reckon that I couldn't have been as strong and determined to persevere with many of my choices I've made for River if I hadn't looked into those topics for myself.

That said, that's not to say there's absolutely no place for formula, but if mothers can be taught FIRSTLY to give breastfeeding a really good shot, because of all the benefits, and supported and encouraged through their problems, or even to supplement with formula as opposed to making a complete switch.

**richelle\_84\_2004**

May 23rd, 2007, 12:16 PM

I would have to say that for me, the midwife that did my second home visit would be the one that mostly stopped me from continuing to sucessfully BF. She came to see K at day 9 to find that K had lost 16% of birthweight. The MW then proceeded to go into a mad panic telling me to rush K to the hospital she needed tests as something was wrong with her. K was born 4.25kg, so she wasn't underweight at all and had been sleeping and feeding 4 hourly so I had no idea there was anything wrong. After a night in hospital and using formula to top her up after having the breast she had put on 85g so they determined I had not enough milk. Unfortunately, because of the state that panicing MW had put me into and how stressed it made me, I suddenly had even less milk and had to stop BF altogether. Because I had been discharged from the hospital midwife program and was only seeing the ECHN, I didn't have the support there to know that with help I could have got milk going again and that it wasn't my fault.

**RachaelAustin**

May 23rd, 2007, 12:19 PM

For starters, Kelly midwives receive NO training how breastfeeding during the degree. So they either learn through having breastfed themselves (or not) or through the midwifery staff they learn through. So if you have a midwife teaching a midwife that has NFI about the techniques of breastfeeding or underlying anatomy and physiology the cycle will continue to repeat itself. Secondly, as paed's or obs continue to recommend formula to LBW or premmie babies in the SCN or NICCU midwives seem to have blindly followed suit in believing that it is necessary. Rather than assisting the mother to express and teach her to express and store her milk. Again, this avallability of artificial baby milk in the hospital leaves an imprint on the mothers brain, that her baby NEEDS artificial baby milk because obviously her milk was no good. It is disasterous to think this and of course isn't evidencd based. So upon discharge she walks into the first chemist and buys the \*necessary\* bottle of formula. Naturally, hospitals do not cover enough breastfeeding education in the antenatal period. WHY? Because most midwives don't know how to properly attach a baby to the breast, at least they often cannot keep their hands off babies heads, they always seem to have to \*help\* the mother breastfeed, this has been researched to cause problems with attachment. Next, the type

of maternity care a woman seeks is going to cause a direct relationship as to the woman successfully breastfeeds her child for the recommended 2-5 years as stated by the WHO. Women who undergo care under an obstetrician (for example) are more likely to have unnecessary interventions, such as induction, forceps, ventouse, episiotomy, augmentation, tears, traumatic birth, difficult birth, higher rates of PTS, PND, LSCS for eg.) in comparison to women who birth with an independent midwife. So why aren't govts providing medicare and insurance for midwives, the specialists in normal birth? Surgeons have access to it. For MCH nurses/midwives should be mandatory for them to become a lactation consultant, and it should be for midwives for that matter to, at least to have done breastfeeding studies. This will stop the conflicting advice and give women access to adequate prenatal breastfeeding education. Women who choose NOT to breastfeed should have to access a lactation consultant for scripts to formula, not a doctor as a doctor has a conflict of interest as a formula fed baby will be a sicker baby (again research knows this) so a doctor could be seen as looking after their own interests. Women who choose to formula feed should also have to have counselling and explore the reasons why they are choosing not to give their baby the best (normal) start to life. Sounds harsh, but in reality babies DIE from not being breastfed. This inquiry is to work out why women don't breastfeed and to fix the system that isn't working for women and babies at the moment. So let's not beat around the bush and tell them (govt) the facts. I could keep going on and on... but that is enough for now :)

**seepi**

May 23rd, 2007, 12:22 PM

I believe the lack of access to medical services is the major problem.

In Canberra wait time for an MCHN is 6 weeks. Obviously if you had feeding problems they need addressing quicker than that. There are drop in sessions (3 hours twice a week), but these involve waiting up to 2.5 hours and are often quickly filled, with a sign then put up 'pls come back next week'.

Canberra also has almost no doctors who bulk bill. Those who do are in 'medical centres' where you cannot make an appointment, but must sit and wait for up to 5 hours. Not something you want to do with an unhappy baby with feeding issues. Also in Canberra it is nearly impossible to get access to a doctor on the day you ring for an appointment.

I consider this problem with even getting access to medical advice to be a major problem in encouraging breastfeeding. It is all very well to educate medical staff to provide better advice, but if it takes days/weeks to see them, hours waiting on the day, and costs 55.00, then most people will not access the services.

**serenity**

May 23rd, 2007, 12:22 PM

I breastfed my son till he was 10 months old but had to supplement with formula from 7 mths due to returning to work. I work for a very large company (an airline) but there were absolutely no facilities to express or store breastmilk and no one was interested in establishing any support for new mothers. It was very disappointing and I feel my son weaned himself early as he eventually preferred the bottle.

I am now pregnant again and have resigned from my position as I feel my children's well being is compromised by me working full-time especially in their first couple of years when I have very little family or support around me to help with child care.

**anney**

May 23rd, 2007, 12:26 PM

Hi all,

I was one of the lucky ones who despite not seeing my daughter for the first time until 18 hours after birth, she latched on straight away and had no trouble breastfeeding for the next 18 months. I did not have any education or advice about feeding my baby during my pregnancy and I did not really think about it, I just thought breast feeding was what you did and was lucky it worked for me. also, I have only had one child so who knows if I would be this lucky again?

whenever I see these types of threads I wonder about where my attitude toward breastfeeding came from. I don't have many early memories of my childhood but one vivid memory I have is my mum sitting up in bed breastfeeding my youngest sister who was born when I was 6. this must have made a big impression on me.

Also I was brought up in a home where breasts were not in anyway sexual objects. I still think that way - I see breasts primarily as providing food for babies not as sexual objects. I think part of the issue is that breasts are now sexualised so much that people may feel less comfortable to use them for feeding. (I would love to know if there is some research on this type of thing - anyone know??)

So I think this all comes down to education of all areas of society but at a very early age, so I guess it is really changing societies attitudes altogether.

Also, I think a simple poll on this is not going to give a real feel for the problem as I think those of us who were lucky enough to be able to successfully breastfeed may give entirely different answers to those who have not been so successful. It would be interesting to see a separate poll for those that breastfed easily compared to those that had problems. it is such a complex issue so lots of luck with it Kelly.

BTW - I did not vote yet. I think lack of education probably fits best for me?

ETA - have just read the post by RachelAustin above and while I don't agree with this statement and find it

a bit unnecessary,  
 not a doctor as a doc has a conflict of interest as a formula fed baby will be a sicker baby (again research knows this) so a doctor could be seen as looking after their own interests.  
 I do agree that there should be a "one stop shop" for breastfeeding advice which is accessible, funded and advertised and staffed by educated professionals.

**\*Linda\***

May 23rd, 2007, 12:40 PM

I voted for Lack of availability/affordability of support, although I think it is a real combination of things. The other option I was tossing up with was lack of education.

When I think back to that first week with Emma, the really difficult times were because I didn't know what I was doing, but the staff at the hospital were so busy I didn't get much help. Then one wonderful midwife helped me & it was probably what made the difference for me. So in my personal experience, lack of available support was the biggest factor.

But I think that lack of education is definitely a big factor. In general I think that as a community we really need more access to advice & be more exposed to seeing others b/f. I think exposure to it is something that really makes a difference.

ETA: - Wow RachaelAustin, I had no idea that midwives don't receive training on b/f! That amazes me! I would say that could be one of the best ways to improve the b/f rate in Aus. As the midwives are there for so much of the support during those first crucial days.

**StaceyStudent**

May 23rd, 2007, 12:45 PM

I voted lack of continuity of care, as I think alot of the other problems would be addressed if there was continuity of care e.g.

- less medical interventions at birth
- more education
- less conflicting advice because the woman would see one main carer
- more support

But then again I agree that the other factors have a big influence as well, such as advice from family and friends, and the work situation.

**IK**

May 23rd, 2007, 12:55 PM

Neeny, I didn't shoot you down in flames. I didn't even know you had posted when I hit 'submit reply', because my post took me so long to compose in between interruptions. I went back to read the posts I missed and, no, your post was not angry at all, so I was definitely not responding to your post (which I hadn't even seen).

I've missed more posts, so I'm going to catch up again (I'm trying to write an assignment as well, so if ever there was split personality...!)

**Cailin**

May 23rd, 2007, 12:59 PM

Can we please not make this thread a for and against about FF vs BF.

This thread & poll has been simply started to find out "What do you think is the biggest barrier to breastfeeding In Australia?"

If you have something to add to this discussion fantastic. But please do NOT turn this thread into another anti vs pro. Or posts will be edited or removed.

If you have a problem with the content of a post you can report it and we will deal with it appropriately. Lets not loose sight of the topic, please.

\*hugs\*

Cailin

**becmc**

May 23rd, 2007, 01:16 PM

I think mis-information from health professionals is a huge barrier, alot of them really don't know what they are talking about.

For example, a friend's new bub wasn't putting on weight and she couldn't express much, so the health nurse told her to not feed at all overnight and in the morning there will be enough to express for a full feed??????? Terrible advice, night feeds are the most important in building supply and some women just

cannot express no matter how much milk they have. Needless to say, she couldn't express anything in the morning, thought she had no milk and put her bub on the bottle.

When my ds was 5 months his weight gain slowed considerably, I was told to comp with formula which I only did once thank god, and then I called the ABA. They were great and told me that it is normal for bf bubs to slow with weight gain at around five months, unlike formula bubs who gain consistently.

The health nurses just don't know what they are talking about, and are putting off so many new mums who are very emotional anyway, and making them feel inadequate so they give up.

**sunshine**

May 23rd, 2007, 01:16 PM

Summary - Education is available for pregnant women; midwives at the hospital I attended were no help at all.

I found that there was plenty of information available that I read whilst pregnant. I also attended a Breastfeeding and new parenting workshop run by the Australian Breastfeeding Association, which was a goldmine of useful information.

Consequently, when I went into hospital to have my first baby, I had a very clear idea of what I was trying to do, different techniques that could help establish a good breastfeeding relationship (e.g. feed immediately after birth, what a good latch on looks and feels like, etc.), how often I should feed, from which side etc. This was very lucky, as the hospital midwives seemed to all have very different ideas. I once had a midwife flounce into my room, "help" my baby attach, then flounce out, only for a different midwife to enter 2 mins later, and tell me I was doing it all wrong and change how I was sitting, baby's attachment etc. I found this upsetting and annoying.

I decided to only ask for help if I felt I needed it, and was able to happily breastfeed my baby for 7 months without any hitches.

My second child is now 5 months old. I am also breastfeeding him (with no thanks to any health professionals, but one call to the ABA helpline - THANK you!).

**IK**

May 23rd, 2007, 01:24 PM

I could not agree more with some posts here about BFing being 'natural'. Yes, it's natural, but we're not 'naturalS' at it in technique! Milk is there, boobs are there, babies mouth is there...we've lost the in-between bits with the way our society operates. It operates behind closed doors where everything is a private matter and so much is not normalised to us.

When I mention that Oscar can feed for as long as he likes, some people say "what if you fall pregnant again?", and they are confused when I reiterate "for as long as he likes", because they are under the impression that feeding must cease when pregnant. That's an education issue.

With education (on more than just how to attach your baby, but on the many benefits of BM for mother and child) you have the comebacks to all sorts of criticisms. And when people realise that you know what you are doing and WHY, they stop saying dumb things (well, mostly).

**nicolelh**

May 23rd, 2007, 01:25 PM

I think one of the major dramas isn't actually listed at all - it's lack of perseverance!

Yes, there can be major problems with feeding, but so many women seem to just give up ridiculously quickly. I think the root cause of this is the opinion that formula feeding is almost or just as good. IT'S NOT!

I had trouble choosing which one to pick so I went with availability of artificial formula, but I think lack of education of health professionals is real high on that list too. I am always infuriated when reading books on childcare (e.g. kidwrangling) that say "breastfeeding is great if you can do it." But then go on to make bucket loads of excuses which a woman can latch on to (forgive the pun) in order to justify giving up quickly. Whenever you read letters to the editor in popular parenting magazines it's constantly filled with letters from FF mothers saying things like "you shouldn't make us feel guilty" etc. Almost never do they publish a letter from a mother who persevered through problems, or from an expert stating just how much better breastfeeding is.

I mean, the books ought to be saying "breastfeeding can be very difficult, you may experience significant problems while learning, but these problems are worth persisting through, even if they seem insurmountable at the time, because breast feeding is infinitely better for you and your baby and formula feeding should be an absolute last resort. Hardly any of the problems that women experience mean that they "need" to go on formula."

And health care experts should be saying the same thing, instead of recommending the bottle as soon as the baby isn't large and plump.

Next time I read a book that says "breast is best if you can do it, but bottle feeding is nothing to be ashamed of" I think I'm going to put it in the blender. I think tins of formula should have to have a statement on them saying "this product is a very poor alternative to breast milk" or "you should only use this product as a last resort." haha, I know, I know, never gonna happen.

If this, admittedly militant, attitude was more common, then people would think a lot harder before going to the "easy option." My mother breastfed 3 of us, after my birth was incredibly traumatic, my brother was a sleepy baby who wouldn't take food and my sister was a dream. My midwife told me she was surprised she breastfed, especially given that this was around the time when bottle feeding was really popular. I asked mum, and she said that as far as she was concerned, bottle feeding was not a suitable alternative, and did I really think that her mother, who breastfed 5 kids, would have allowed her to give up? I think that last comment is a very big key. Older generations need to support the younger ones, and perhaps even be a bit militant about insisting that they push through problems, while getting them all the help they need. Breastfeeding is passed down from generation to generation.

#### chickenlittle

May 23rd, 2007, 01:27 PM

I was one of the lucky ones who really didn't have to work too hard breastfeeding both my babies. But I am also a voracious reader and had many books and breastfeeding information learned and studied by the time I gave birth.

Without this information, which I chased up myself just through natural interest, I would have been truly lost should I have encountered problems.

Of all the pamphlets and info I received during pre-natal care, both through the public system first time round, then through my obstetrician when under private care, there was virtually nothing on breastfeeding/benefits of/problems to expect/importance of persistence etc.

In free information handed out - ie bounty bags and sample packs - there's more emphasis placed on advertising from companies offering photos for your newborn, or baby capsule hire. Surely if we're receiving bags of freebies and info, there can be at least one comprehensive booklet on breastfeeding. Or a fridge magnet. Or SOMETHING! ANYTHING!

#### Study Mummy

May 23rd, 2007, 01:32 PM

I voted lack of continuity of care because what was a huge help to me was having the same midwife who had seen me throughout preg. and birth, do home visits for 5 weeks post-natally ... I found it very difficult establishing breastfeeding, it was PAINFUL, got mastitis, my son wanted feeding every 2 hours ... but having someone to answer my questions, watch me feed (without me having to get out of PJs or travel), tell me what a good job I was doing, was a godsend. She was also able to deflect the well meaning advice of my mother and MIL, neither of whom had breastfeed for very long or very successfully.

Close 2nd would be lack of education ... there's loads of information out there but it's very simplistic and none of it talks about how painful it can be. I kept remembering during 3 months of pain a midwife friend with 3 children who said to me just before the birth, "you do know breastfeeding is painful to begin with don't you?". The fact that a 'professional' who had also done it three times experienced the same thing was a comfort. I got so frustrated when I read though that if baby is attached correctly it won't hurt - now that's true, but not at the start when I had grazes and cracks - they needed to heal before it would not be painful. I used to give up trying to reattach after 10 to 15 minutes (screaming baby, tired mother ... it was just easier to deal with the pain - let's face it, it was less painful than childbirth!). Have stuck with it and my boy is now 10 months old and I intend to keep going until he's ready to wean (tho will be encouraging him from 12 months I think). Being honest, I have never enjoyed breastfeeding and have only done it because I know it's good for my son (and it's easier than having to take sterilised water and formula with me whenever I go anywhere). I am really looking forward to not having "working boobies" anymore!

#### Karina

May 23rd, 2007, 01:49 PM

I think it could be a combination of:

Conflicting advice - I personally didnt experience this as I havent needed to seek advice on BF, but after listening to what some of the mums at mothers group say, they seem to be having this problem where everyone gives differnt advice and it just gets overwhelming and confusing. Also some nurses and midwives seem to have different opinions and ideas.

Going back to work with lack of bf support - this I believe will be a barrier for me if I want to breastfeed long term. There's nowhere appropriately private at my workplace to express (unless I want to do it in the loos or at my desk - i dont think so) and I feel a bit funny about storing my EBM in the fridge there as I just \*know\* my colleagues will think its wierd and I'll cop flak for it - lack of education to them, I suppose. My workplace is not the type of place that will be willing to accommodate for this sort of thing either (hell, I had enough trouble getting maternity leave!) Lots of women need to go back to work earlier than they had

*Formula for disaster*



hoped which would be one of those things making it tricky for mums to continue bf if theres nowhere to express at work/lack of support from their workplace.

**katiepie**

May 23rd, 2007, 01:51 PM

For me it was conflicting advice, lack of continuity of care, further on down the track lack of breastfeeding facilities at work

In the hospital when we were learning to breastfeed some midwives were helpful and some not and Megan was a night owl and all my problems were in the middle of the night and there were not as many midwives on and those who were, were impatient. Megan was feeding every 1.5hs-2hrs and the hospital policy was 4hourly feeds. I could not do this unless i let her scream for the other 2hours!! And no one would tell me if she was latching on properly.

I then felt alone at home not sure who to turn to the hospital not helpful and found i difficult to get out by myself. As i think i had a big nipple Megan just did not want the whole lot in her mouth, so i felt i had attachment problems. When i saw pead at 6 weeks he said she had put on too much weight and grown too much!! How is this possible from breastfeeding? Maybe too much weight but food alone can't get her to grow 10cm?! Luckily for me i went with my instincts and at 8weeks Let Megan do what ever with the nipple and feed every 2Hours. it was fine after that until i had to go back to uni and there was no breastfeeding areas or child minding facilities at uni so at 6 months she had to be weaned :-(

**azima**

May 23rd, 2007, 01:53 PM

I vote lack of education - but I would qualify that as actual lack of education in society, not just mothers to be.  
Great point.

**marisa man**

May 23rd, 2007, 01:54 PM

I agree with NicoleH: Whenever you read letters to the editor in popular parenting magazines it's constantly filled with letters from FF mothers saying things like "you shouldn't make us feel guilty" etc. Almost never do they publish a letter from a mother who persevered through problems, or from an expert stating just how much better breastfeeding is.

When Kayne was born I had 2 shocking bouts of mastitis which I ignored cos I had no idea what I had. The lack of support off family , Friends and so called professionals to continue with the breastfeeding was completely disheartening. I followed my gut instincts and kept breastfeeding him even though I stressed & cried 10 minutes before every feed as I knew how excruciating the pain was going to be. I am glad I did persevere - he was breast fed til he was 11 months old.  
I am just hoping I can continue BF the twins!

**MelanieR**

May 23rd, 2007, 02:00 PM

Wow, so many response. Obviously I'm not the only one passionate about this topic! I have made my own submission to the enquiry so I'll try not to be too detailed here as well, but I also think there are many factors.

From the list, I think the main factors are conflicting advice, lack of continuity of care, lack of education (for the public and health professionals)and the availability of artifical milk. I experienced lots of problems when Jack was born - he had a tongue-tie and couldn't attach, I had engorgement beyond belief (and again with Thomas - I expressed over 440ml in one sitting and was still not empty!), sore nipples and mastitis twice in the first 3 weeks. Despite seeking help from mws and lc in the hussy, and the MCHN after discharge, I did not receive useful help until joining the ABA. In fact, not one health professional (until I found a gp who specialised in tongue-tie snips) believed that the tongue-tie was the problem. I was instead told I had flat nipples, and that it was this and not the tongue-tie that was preventing attachment. Then after Tom was born the mw told me I had great nipples for bfing - these are the same nipples, which is it??? Well, seeing as I was able to successfully feed Jack without nipple shields once his tongue-tie had been snipped, and was able to successfully feed Thomas without nipples shields from birth, I'm guessing the problem really was the tongue-tie.

In my submission I also list other reasons that I feel contribute to the low breastfeeding rates, including mis-information from health professionals (one gp told me that bm is as effective as water in preventing illness), the view in society that ff is the norm, especially after 6 months and even more so after 1 year, and the inability to get products and support for bfing easily - eg breast pads, breast milk bags, info on expressing and bfing after returning to work etc. I am sure there were more things I mentioned too (I think my submission is no 108 or 109 on the inquiry submissions website if you are interested).

Whoops, I think I did get too detailed. Better stop now!!

**Bathsheba**

May 23rd, 2007, 02:03 PM

I thought long and hard about this one.... almost chose "lack of education" but in the end, like Tanby who I agree with %100, I think it's the accessibility and marketing of artificial milk. I specifically chose the "marketing" because I think this is the worse of the two situations that the govt. should actually tighten up on and do something about.

The way I came to this decision is because, going back to 'lack of education', sometimes you can educate people until you are blue in the face but at the end of the day people will do what is easiest if they think the outcome will be pretty much the same.

I don't want to offend all the poor mums who have tired desperately to BF their babies because my heart goes out to them... but I believe there are many mums in the broader community (not so much here in BB) who try to kid themselves that artificial milk is "just as good" so that their lives are easier. I draw an analogy with the Healthy Food/Diet campaigns: everyone KNOWS that you should eat from all 5 food groups (2 fruit and 5 vegetable serves per day etc) but how many people honestly do??? Most of us consume things that we know are of very little nutritional benefit but we eat them anyway because it's convenient and/or it tastes good and we don't think it will do that much harm.

So I think, at the end of the day, it's human nature to do what comes easiest and I honestly don't know what can be done about this. I'm not saying either that ALL mothers take the easiest option! There are hundreds of wonderful stories of womens' journeys to breast feed their babies despite difficulties both here in BB and on the ABA forum. I have the deepst admiration for these women :)

So I just want to restate that my main point is that artificial milk companies should not be allowed to convince the public that their product is comparable to breast milk. Not just because it is swaying the choice of parents... but because it is infuencing everyone and minimising the importance of breast feeding in general and impeding the BFing 'friendliness' of society as a whole, workplaces/shopping malls etc.

ETA: I also think that a few "warm and fuzzy 'Huggies-Style' Breastfeeding "Ads" (Govt education campaign) on TV would help... I'm sure a clever marketer could beat the formula companies at their own game ;)

**MelanieR**

May 23rd, 2007, 02:03 PM

Off topic, but Karina, I continued to feed after returning to work. It was actually easier than I expected. I hope you give it a shot!

**ashsmum**

May 23rd, 2007, 02:03 PM

Hi Kelly,

I think a lot of people just generally think breastfeeding is 'weird' and feel uncomfortable around us. Especially if you breastfed past 6 months. I am still breastfeeding my son 15 months and a lot of people are telling me it's time to wean him cause he's a toddler. Perhaps they see it as sexual?? I can't get my head around it. I asked my husband and he said it's just 'weird' when a woman breastfeeds a toddler... what ever that means! It's a real shame as it's not sexual or weird, actually very natural and the best thing for them. The world Health Organisation recommends 6 months of exclusive breastfeeding and feeding them for two years as well as solids. It's not fair of other people to judge or comment, I think they should just keep their comments to themselves and live their own lives! They are our breasts and our children! That felt good to get off my chest actually :) So this might come under Family &/ friends ideals/advice/expectation???

Kind Regards,  
Charmaine

**IK**

May 23rd, 2007, 02:13 PM

It's an intractable situation, the way I see it. Whilst, yes, formula and wet-nursing should be for when breastfeeding really does not work out (not for want of trying), it's hard then to, simultaneously, remove the stigma from those feeding methods so that mothers who CAN'T BF don't feel like failures. Again, education can help with this one. It is not helpful to have a 'breastfeed or die' attitude, and neither is it helpful to espouse 'if it's too hard, just use formula'. There IS an inbetween, but we get caught up with the extremes instead.

I knew I COULD bf, and yes, perseverance is a huge part of it. But, why do we persevere? Because we know the substantial benefits of it. Those who persevere do it because they KNOW what they're working towards. It is too simplistic to say that the problem is that people don't persevere. Perseverance has an aim - those who don't know the aims, i.e. those who don't have that education, are far less likely to persevere when they hit the speed humps. The education (knowledge, experience, exposure) has to be there for perseverance to happen.

Lack of family support, to me, points to lack of education of the family and support systems. I really do

think it comes back to education and knowledge.

ETA:

Katiepie - there SHOULD be facilities for you to express or bf at uni - get yourself in contact with your Women's Contact Officer person, facilities manager or student association and look into this. Please don't take it for granted that you have to wean. If you start making noises now, by the time you go back there should be something set up, if nothing is now. Find out if staff have expressing facilities. If they don't, get them on board, too! I've started to make noises at my uni about this. QUT has got excellent facilities for families and bfing students. It is not good enough to have students assume they have to wean! Please don't take this one lying down. It's your child's human right to have access to breastmilk and your right to keep feeding your child. I am only studying part time, but I also do volunteering, and I have to palm DS off to MIL to get some study in. It's heart-wrenching for me, but I express when he's not here and that provides milk for him for when MIL has him. I freeze it into cubes and grab a few, pop them into a sippy cup along with some food and off he goes. If he's going for more than a few hours then he gets a container of frozen EBM. It CAN be done. During a recent weekend school, when I wasn't able to use the psychology dept's sleep labs, I expressed in my car and brought an insulated lunch bag with frozen packs to store the milk till I got home. If your BFing means a lot to you, you'll find a way...I did :)

This is part of making BFing normal in our society. If it were normalised, there would be far more facilities available for expressing and BFing, because more workplaces, uni spaces, social spaces etc would be aware of what lactating women need access to. It's definitely a bee in my bonnet!

**Jelvie**

May 23rd, 2007, 02:19 PM

It is not helpful to have a 'breastfeed or die' attitude, and neither is it helpful to espouse 'if it's too hard, just use formula'. There IS an inbetween, but we get caught up with the extremes instead. What is the in between though? Because if BF genuinely is too hard or not possible for some mothers, what is the alternative to formula? I know when I couldn't BF my first there was no alternative. No milk banks, no wet nurses on standby. He had to be fed, so he had to have formula.

**totalfrog**

May 23rd, 2007, 02:21 PM

I am new around here but I thought I would throw in my opinion. Back in the day a woman's mother/sisters/aunts who had children of their own would help her with the new baby and give advice on breastfeeding and the like. They knew what they were talking about because they had been there and done it.

Today women are expected to listen to health professionals that not only haven't had children but also haven't been educated themselves. I had a midwife in hospital who tried to convince me I held my daughter wrong and constantly tried to move her around while I was trying to feed her!! My mother caught her doing it and told her where to go. :lol:

Luckily I had a mum who had breastfed us and a sister who breastfed my niece and they were willing to offer advice and listen to me whinge about being the only one who could feed the baby at 3am! My husband was also very supportive of whatever I chose.

I think we need more support to BF our babies. IT IS HARD!! but just like labour nobody tells you the truth before you try and do it, leaving women with unrealistic expectations and feeling like failures when they really shouldn't.

**nixonsmama**

May 23rd, 2007, 02:35 PM

i had issues with bf since day one ...

every few hours or so a midwife would hold my boob in one hand a bub in the other and i just sat there i had no idea what was happening at all .. ds didnt latch on in hosp and i went home and hired a pump... each feed i tried to get him to latch on but it was tricky... after 2 months of pumping he finally latched on ... i was relieved .... when he was 5 months my supply dropped and i tried everytihg to get it back.. nothing worked... i feel like i havent tried hard enough even tho theres nothing left for me to try.... people and nurses shame you when you whip out a bottle and everytime in public... i mourn for my milk and die of shame when ppl look at me ... i even went back to the lc who helped me in the beginning and she said if i was happy to give some feeds and formula at other it was ok... she didnt help me when i said i wanted each feed to be a bf... it was a sad day that day, she was a professional and didnt even help.. pfft!!

**Bathsheba**

May 23rd, 2007, 02:36 PM

Edited my post.

Loved your comments Totalfrog: :) "IT IS HARD!! but just like labour nobody tells you the truth before you try and do it, leaving women with unrealistic expectations and feeling like failures when they really shouldn't."

Reply With Quote

**IK**

May 23rd, 2007, 02:36 PM

Jelvie - I was talking about attitudes and that there can be an in-between attitude. I mean an attitude of "well, you have tried and tried because you know that the benefits are plentiful, but now we need to look at plan B". The WHO has this sort of attitude - Plan A is to BF, plan B is wet-nurse, plan C is EBM (have I got that mixed up?), plan D is formula, or something to that effect. Whilst 'last resort' is the best term I can think of, when other people use it, it tends to have a slightly negative connotation. Maybe that's just me. It concerns me that the term infuses a mother, who is already feeling guilty, with feelings of ineptitude. So, Jelvie, I'm not sticking my head in the sand, I realise that in our society it's a BM or formula dichotomy (not always, though - as someone else said, they comp feed, and that's possible for many women, too), it's the ATTITUDE I'm referring to. We don't have to be 'nipple nazis' and we don't have to be the women who say 'look, it's just easier to FF'. We can be women who are empowered with knowledge, and then act according to our own circumstances, or advise with consideration for someone else's circumstances. Even the ABA is currently trying to tackle the false image that is out there portraying a bunch of women saying 'you HAVE to BF, no matter what'. Both extremes concern me.

KWIM?

ETA I'm probably not explaining myself well, but let me stress that my post was referring to attitudes, not actual feeding practices

Nixonsmama - your lactation consultant did the right thing by you! She can't control the fact that you will want to beat yourself up about it - she recognised that the best thing for your baby was to comp feed and was helping you to accept that. It's not a reflection of her professionalism or skill that you didn't want to accept her acceptance. All I can say is that I hope you feel better about it now or very soon - there is plenty more about your baby's life that you will beat yourself up about, let go of something you really tried hard to 'fix' :hugs:

**YummyMummy**

May 23rd, 2007, 02:59 PM

I feel the continuity of care for new mothers albeit 1st or subsequent births in Australia is dire considering all pregnancies and babies are different!! As a new mum - to my 3rd - in the UK, the midwife visited me at home everyday for 10 consecutive days enabling me to ascertain a routine, heal, milk come in, deal with my emotions and other issues thrown at me and have the support of a team of midwife's to answer innumerable questions, weigh my baby and HELP with breastfeeding. With my 4th baby born in Australia I was on my own. On day 5 having to make my way to the community centre for her heal \*\*\*\*\* test whilst dealing with terrible problems feeding thus amounting in 3 courses of antibiotics and visits to the dr. and Ob. whilst dragging a 20month with me between feeds and sleeps.....not to mention the soreness of giving birth, um the last thing i wanted to do!

I think that makes a small point -

Good luck!!

YummyMummuy xx

**jimssteph21**

May 23rd, 2007, 02:59 PM

I really think that intervention at birth has a huge impact on the breast feeding relationship. DS1 was not given to me until 24 hours after his birth, because of emergency c/sec. I only bf for 4 months, his attachment was poor so I started to dry up. A scheduled c/sec with DS2 and he was not given to me to feed for 48+ hours due to being put in to a humidycrib. I bf him for 8 months but he also had poor attachment and was a lazy sucker. But I made specific requests to feed my 3rd son very soon after birth, and within 2 hours of my 3rd c/sec I was feeding him. He had a great suck and excellent attachment. I think the time between birth and the 1st breastfeed has a significant effect on how well the breastfeeding will go for you. Granted breastfeeding is usually introduced quickly with natural births but c/secs are a different matter. The faster a baby and mother are reunited after the surgery really helps in my experience.

**Rach80**

May 23rd, 2007, 03:03 PM

For me I also had supply issues. My Bubs was 8 weeks prem so i expressed for 7 weeks as bubs had to be tube feed she also had alot of trouble attaching to me while in the hospital. I bf untill she was close to 5mths (3mths corrected), and at that stage she was bf every 1.5 -2hrs apart, including nights. For me complications at birth, affordability/availability of support and education were what i think were my main concerns.

**Jennifer13**

May 23rd, 2007, 03:11 PM

This is a hard one for me, since I didn't have too many problems and had access to an abundance of education, etc.

I chose Going back to work with a lack of bf support. I think many of the comments on here relate to why women don't bf soon after the birth, in the first few months, which I think is hard pin down (society?). But from the figures I've read, Australia also has a shocking record of bfing to 6 mths and as for getting to 12

mths...! IMO the reason for that is that so many Mums have to go back to work. There aren't a lot of expressing facilities in most workplaces, it's considered a bit 'odd' and childcare centres don't seem to be geared around using expressed bm. While I didn't have to go back to work, since I work from home, I had to organise times to be at clients' offices around Lucy's feeding times (certainly can't whip out a pump in the middle of a meeting!), and OMG that's a challenge! In countries where there is paid maternity leave the bf rate is much higher.

My second choice would be a lack of good education. Some of the stories I've heard from others and what they've been told (by health professionals, which is scary) is totally contradictory to what I read from reliable sources and found to be true.

**bon**

May 23rd, 2007, 03:15 PM

I haven't voted. I can't really say what is the single biggest barrier for breastfeeding in this country is...they are all very valid reasons.

A big one I think is women being discharged too early from hospital, before their milk has come in and without any real knowledge of what to expect, and how to deal with difficulties. So I suppose that could be classed as lack of education.

I don't think that getting rid of formula is the answer. That is like saying because we have an obesity problem in this country we should get rid of all takeaway shops, or get rid of all high fat foods in supermarkets. Or because cars contribute to pollution that we should ban them. It implies that we are not smart enough or too ignorant of the issues to be able to make our own decision.

I think at the heart of it is lack of support - in the home, in society and at work. Not just for breastfeeding either but for parenting in general.

Then there is the fact that, no matter what you are told or taught about breastfeeding, no matter if you have all the support in the world - there are those who just don't want to do it. Purely and simply, they don't want to do it, and there is nothing that will change that. In the past, those women who didn't want to breastfeed (usually those in a higher socio-economic class) got a wet nurse. That is not an option these days, at least in this country, so those who don't want to breastfeed use formula.

**IK**

May 23rd, 2007, 03:16 PM

Yep, Jennifer - good education, the right kind of education, helpful education! Good point :)  
ETA - but Bon, why don't they want to breastfeed? I really do believe that if many of these women who 'don't want to breastfeed' were given a sound, balanced education about the ups and downs of BFing, that many would then give it a go.

It IS a lot like labour and birth - you know that the benefits far outweigh the hassles of it. With me when I first started BFing, I had the education about why I was persevering with it, because I knew that once I'd gotten past the initial period of learning to BF, I would be richly rewarded. I can now say that I had no idea just HOW richly rewarding my BFing experience would be, so I am especially glad that I had the support from friends and, most of all, DP. Yes, non-BFing mothers DO miss out on the unique aspects of an infant-mother bond that come with BFing - for the ones who needn't miss out on that (that is, the ones who don't have physiological or medication issues), this should be a reason to persevere, the rewards are great and very much worth the initial attachment period, because it DOES get better :)

**rayray**

May 23rd, 2007, 03:20 PM

OK, I wanna change my vote to whichever category this comes under:

A big one I think is women being discharged too early from hospital... before their milk has come in and without any real knowledge of what to expect, and how to deal with difficulties.

Bon reminded me of the other thing the midwives when I had DS told me Women should have the choice to stay in hospital until their milk comes in and b/f is established. I guess a budget surplus is more important.

**amy&rafi**

May 23rd, 2007, 03:20 PM

hello kelly and fellow mums!

I voted for 'interventions at birth'...

if policy-makers want to know why there is big barriers to breastfeeding they MUST first recognise the great disadvantage most mothers begin with... many women are captive consumers to a health care system that does not make it easy for their bodies to transition into motherhood...

hospital protocol calls for a cascade of interventions that severely hinder the mother- infant bond as well as a

mothers body's ability to provide the necessary hormone triggers that make breastfeeding 'natural' and enjoyable

even a 'natural' birth comes with sintocin injected after the head crowns, premature clamping and cutting of the cord and a vitamin K injection (and hep B vaccination) for bub... and that's if everything 'goes well'!... our health care system needs to re-think its policies regarding birth and care for all mum's and bubs.

i strongly believe by simply letting women be during and immediatly following the birth of their babies (rather than the unnessesary poking and prodding and injections that often go on) the rate of breastfeeding would increase! the transition into motherhood and also breastfeeding would be smoother and more rewarding for thousands of mothers in the australian system...

i also think the other options mentioned are definately contributing factors, however many of these could be avoided with some preparation and information gathering on behalf of the mother. i hate to sound cold but each of us as parents are responsible for our choices and experiences in regard to our babies. at the end of the day, it's not the midwife (with his/her discouraging words) whose baby gets formula over breastmilk- it's yours- so if it's not what you want for your child- then dismiss their negativity and get a second opinion. :)

\*food for thought\*: a lactation consultant is going to work out to be alot cheaper then infant formula in the long run; and also going to cost you alot less emotionally knowing your giving your baby the best...

there is a plethora of positive information out there (in the form of books, pamphlets, mothers groups and on the web) that can both educate and inspire mums to commence and persist with breastfeeding- but you have to get out there and look for it (and honestly- you don't have to dig deep to find it).

after arming myself with a range of positive information there was not a single advertismment or negative comment from health care workers that could deter me from breastfeeding after the birth of my son. i had sourced mothers groups toward the end of my pregnancy that supported my ideas and was ready to turn to them for support if needed. i began planning soon after i found out i was pregnant how to adjust my work and financial situation because i knew i would not be returning to work for 6 years after having a baby so we downsized to make that possible.

it is so important that every parent set goals and then place ourselves in a position that gives us the best chance to succeed :angel2:

#### **hannahfrodoo**

May 23rd, 2007, 03:28 PM

I chose conflicting advice after the birth but I also think lack of education is a big factor. I am still BF my 11 month old - only because I was absolutely determined to do it. I had the bleeding, pus-oozing, infected, cracked nipples until DD was over 3 months old. I have large, gaping scars in my nipples where the cracks were.

I put my problems down to a few things:

1 - DD was attaching incorrectly from the start. I asked a midwife at hospital if I was 'doing it right' since it was hurting a LOT. She said - without even looking - 'Oh yes, it's normal for it to hurt.' When I saw a LC about a week later she told me 'If it hurts, you're doing it wrong - take her off and reposition.' So much conflicting advice. There should be LCs there at the hospital who can talk you through it and give you strategies for coping.

2 - I saw the LC at my child health clinic every couple of days for the first 6 weeks. It was just getting worse and worse. It was only when I went to the doctor for my post-partum check up and was prescribed antibiotics for the infection that things finally started to improve. The LC was wonderful - BUT she should have known that it was infected and sent me to a doctor earlier. Better training/standards for LCs would definitely help.

3 - I knew that people got 'cracked nipples' from breastfeeding. I had NO IDEA it could last 3-4 months like mine did or that it would be so very excruciatingly painful. In my antenatal classes cracked nipples were talked about as though it was a problem that lasted a day or 2. You just lathered on some lanolin and gritted your teeth and it would go away.

sorry - hugely long!

#### **taralee**

May 23rd, 2007, 03:28 PM

So many good arguments. i have to say lack of continuity of care. i had the 'problem' of having way too much milk and aside from that i couldnt understand why, after being told that evie was attached perfectly, had a good strong suck and was positioned well that it was so incredibly painful. i had massive blisters on my nipples, they were cracked and bleeding so badly that i couldnt wear any clothes over top of them. when i rang the hospital at 9 at night for help in tears i was told the next available appointment was 3 days away. So there i was crying in pain and distress that my baby was vomiting up my blood just when i am trying to feed her, my toes curled the second she attached from the pain and i am being told my only

option was to wait to see a LC in 3 days and then dismissed with 'have a good night'.

I was totally ready to give up until someone said 'it hurts because your nipples need to get used to it' and that was all i needed. why couldnt someone have told me that from the beginning. it took 10 days for the pain to stop and my nipples to heal but i kept feeding and still am but i was really disappointed that help wasnt really there when i needed it.

So i support LC checkups every week for the first 6 weeks, in the home if necessary and i agree that women (mostly 1st time mums) not be discharged until the milk has come in and b/f'ing is established to the point where the mother is capable to do it on her own with total confidence.

**Julie Doula**

May 23rd, 2007, 03:31 PM

These are my top three:

Interventions at birth  
Lack of continuity of care  
Conflicting advice after birth

This is what I think impacts the establishment of breastfeeding initially:

- high rates of intervention which undermine women's self confidence and instinct

- failure to protect the initial bonding time after a baby is born - during the first 15 minutes.

We should promote and respect:

- \* undisturbed skin to skin contact
- \* delay routine measuring and examination, except for life-saving measures.
- \* keep as quiet as possible
- \* leave the couple and baby alone, don't talk to them unless absolutely necessary
- \* quiet, soft lighting, warmth

I don't see the bonding window really respected in many institutions. Sometimes they leave parents & babe for an hour or two to 'bond', which is good - but it's the first 15 minutes when the oxytocin helpers are there, that needs special regard - as well.

I think we need to look at another way to handle third stage. Directed pushing leads to lots of chatter during (often) a managed third stage, then comes clean-up and suturing .... somewhere in the bustle, the critical bonding moments are just lost.

Undisturbed birth leads to undisturbed bonding, which paves the ways for successful breastfeeding.

Undermining confidence in our bodies' ability to breastfeed I think is a continuum of undermining our bodies' ability to birth.

Sweeping generalisations I know - but them's my thoughts.

I think as a society we don't have that much respect for and confidence in womanly knowledge, intuition and arts. Because it is not a precise science. But powerful and valid, nevertheless.

I really like the idea of an introduction to birth & breastfeeding education as part of reproductive health education in high schools - for BOTH genders!

**IK**

May 23rd, 2007, 03:32 PM

Good point, Amy&rafi, there is definitely a level of responsibility that a lot of women abdicate. Others just don't have the exposure to BFing, though - how do you find out about something no-one around you values? Some women don't have basic research skills to seek out resources. I often get frustrated when a woman tells me she didn't know about such and such, because if they had just asked around they would have known sooner. It's easy to say it is their fault for not investigating it themselves, but women have become so disempowered in this society of advertising saturation, images of babies=bottles, hospitals comp feeding babies etc, that it is no wonder that, realistically, women just don't know better. Ideally, they should be more instinctive and questioning, but it's just not as simple as that anymore.

**bon**

May 23rd, 2007, 03:38 PM

I haven't voted. I can't really say what is the single biggest barrier for breastfeeding in this country is...they are all very valid reasons.

A big one I think is women being discharged too early from hospital, before their milk has come in and without any real knowledge of what to expect, and how to deal with difficulties. So I suppose that could be classed as lack of education.

I don't think that getting rid of formula is the answer. That is like saying because we have an obesity problem in this country we should get rid of all takeaway shops, or get rid of all high fat foods in supermarkets. Or because cars contribute to pollution that we should ban them. It implies that we are not smart enough or too ignorant of the issues to be able to make our own decision.

I think at the heart of it is lack of support - in the home, in society and at work. Not just for breastfeeding either but for parenting in general.

Then there is the fact that, no matter what you are told or taught about breastfeeding, no matter if you have all the support in the world - there are those who just don't want to do it. Purely and simply, they don't want to do it, and there is nothing that will change that. In the past, those women who didn't want to breastfeed (usually those in a higher socio-economic class) got a wet nurse. That is not an option these days, at least in this country, so those who don't want to breastfeed use formula.

**Bathsheba**

May 23rd, 2007, 03:49 PM

Ideally, (women) should be more instinctive and questioning, but it's just not as simple as that anymore.

I agree totally.

I'm also with rayray and after reading all these brilliant comments I could almost change my vote. I still don't know whether education is a "cure all" but it certainly would help more than silencing the formula companies I guess. I like the comment about getting a script for formula, maybe for babies younger than 6 months so that some professional counselling could be provided.

I also really agree with the comments about being discharged from hospital before your milk comes in... infact it almost seems like they want you out of there before that happens because all of a sudden you will become too demanding/needy at that point...well that's just how I felt when I had my 2nd child. I knew that I would want extra help when my milk came in but they kept saying to me "Oh it'd be much more comfortable for you at home wouldn't you think?" A total fob off! But it was only because I was a 2nd time mum that I new what was coming...

I also enjoyed reading Jennifer's comments about countries that have paid maternity leave usually have high BF rates... fortunately I've never had to juggle work and BFing but I can't imagine that it would be easy!

Really enjoying reading all the comments... it's interesting how my initial ideas have changed a bit since reading the entire thread too.

~Kim~

May 23rd, 2007, 03:57 PM

Another conflicting advice vote here - the midwives in the private hospital I was at ALL had different views. You'd think in a ward they would have a uniform policy. Can you push for that Kelly?

I was really lucky to have a fantastic MCHN who got me onto an equally fantastic LC - and we're still going today. I battled with cracks, mastitis, huge flow, non sucking, bad latching, PND, a MIL who told me I was undernourishing my baby (WTF?!?) but I kept going with my DH, LCs and Mum's support. However I do believe that inital consistent education would have been a better start.

**Roryrory**

May 23rd, 2007, 04:07 PM

JMO, but if there was more education I think conflicting advice wouldn't be as much of an issue. I had lots of conflicting advice but saw it all as a variety of options to choose that were right for me and my bub, rather than the right vs the wrong way to do something, IYKWIM....

But Kim I know what you mean about the need for a uniform policy

**jbie**

May 23rd, 2007, 04:16 PM

i voted lack of education, cos though all the other factors are totally significant, with enough education (and then support) one can trump them all

**dachlostar**

May 23rd, 2007, 04:20 PM



I think that uniform policy is a great idea.

At Westmead the midwives who had extra training in lactation (and other issues) had it on thier badges under thier names so they were easy to identify.

I think hospitals need more LCs on staff and I think that a LC should visit each Mum and Bub the same way that the paed, physio and hearing people do. It's silly that the paed comes to you but the LC doesn't.

Maybe if they did this they could identify the women who genuinly can't BF quickly so that they can move onto plan B (expressing &/or formula) ASAP with a minimum of pain, fuss and guilt.

**Nikki\_M**

May 23rd, 2007, 04:21 PM

I'm a bit of a lurker.. and haven't read this post through but I just wanted to put my 2-cents in. I hope that I'm not too bold in saying this.

But other than the lack of knowledge and the publics view of public breastfeeding.. I think a huge part is how every tries to be PC... so as not to offend anyone we don't always push the benefits of breastfeeding. We \*know\* that Breast is Best but often when said in a group of mothers, we're met with scowls, or "you're only saying that because you can do it" etc. It sucks that, in our efforts to keep everyone happy, we have to keep quiet all the benefits because people who didn't breastfeed get upset. :rolleyes:

Lest we remind people that breastfeeding is what the boobs were made for.

**kyliealysha**

May 23rd, 2007, 04:48 PM

I hear so many women saying they wanted their babies to sleep through the night so they switched to formula :( It's such a myth too as my fully breastfed baby slept 12 hours a niight from 2 months old. The problem is that there are a lot of well meaning family and friends out there spreading this myth further and further.

**caro**

May 23rd, 2007, 04:52 PM

I can sense the dismay and almost-anger is some posters here, and I think it's important to say that I don't think anyone here is talking about women who cannot breastfeed for physiological or medication reasons. I am pretty sure we're talking about women who can otherwise breastfeed but give up for one or a combination of the reasons Kelly listed.

I find the 'nipple nazis' tend to be MCH nurses and vigilante midwives (who are notorious for conflicting advice) and the tag has somehow stuck to ABA, quite unfairly. I say unfairly because even the ABA forum, has a thread all about 'when breastfeeding doesn't work out'...how can you justifiably call ABA the 'nipple nazis' when they are real believers in 'breastfeeding is for baby, not baby is for breastfeeding'? If there is no breastfeeding, baby has to eat something else!OMG who said the ABA Were Nipple Nazis ?

Just remember, as Caro said, not everyone can breastfeedI didnt say it ? I know that is true but I actually didnt write it here ?

Pesonally the sooner the US And THEM sterotyping of BF V FF stops the better.

In a Perfect world sorry in \*MY\* Perfect World all women would Breastfeed UNLESS

\*they had a medical condition preventing it , This could also mean they were on certain medications that no matter what time they took them would get into baby via the milk.

\*they had a pyshcological reason - look people have pyshcological reasons for lots of things Fear of flying etc - so I dont see why it shouldnt apply to a woman who has a fear or distate of Breastfeeding - I dont understand that myself but then nor do I understand someone who can pick up a spider - kwim ?

And thats it there is no other reason that a woman cant Breast feed in \*MY\* perfect world where the support would be abundant etc.

I've read this board for some time now and the overwhelming factor I have seen here and through other arenas is that women give up around the same time at either the 1st week around engorgement OR around 3 weeks or around 6 weeks mark...Of course then there are other times down the track that are trigger times for giving up also but these ones i just mentioned seem to be a pattern..

I feel that is because there is so little support , sometimes none for engorgment, for myself I had had ZERO Sleep for 2 days when next my bbs started to engorge by day 4 I couldnt get my baby on and with no sleep and a crying baby I was beside myself - yes even being a 2cnd time mum..lucky for me the hospital had wonderful LC's and we were off racing...

NExt hurdle is when engorgement passes - OH NO I've run out of milk is the next hurdle so many women

think and face because A) bubs is starting to come around after the birth and b) because bbs have softened and settled down and you really do think you have run out of milk..

Then if you pass that one there is the next one of around 5-8 weeks when bubs goes through their major growth spurt and again it feels like you can satisfy them ...

Baby is screaming, mother is exhausted and busy with other kids school runs whatever and snapping at everyone - and all she hears is give her/him some formula

She feels she has no other choice..She cant do it ALLso she starts to top up with formula and slowly as she increases it more and more her milk becomes less and less or bubs starts to refuse the boob preferring the easier suck of the bottle and then she says to herself "see I knew i had run out of milk"

For women to truly establish breastfeeding and work through these hurdles they need to stay home for 6 weeks and not go anywhere unless absolutely necessary ie doctors appts And obviously if she has other children and has to take them to school and has no one else to help out

But ideally and especially for New 1st Time mums its imperative for women to stay at home for the 6 weeks and really establish the breastfeeding. Its damn hard work and trying to go out socially or shopping whilst getting little sleep and bubs learning bf as well as mum the best thing she can do is stay home and relax with baby. Same with visitors too many visitors to home in the 6weeks period is also detrimental baby being handled too much etc.

Of course the above doesnt apply to everyone, some women are blessed and it is a breeze with no troubles but they are few and far between - Most women have some sort of problem during the 1st 6 weeks...and with staying at home , not going out, having infrequent visitors, getting support from LC's resting, giving it a bit extra perserverance ,a good breast feeding relationship CAN BE ESTABLISHED

But i find that many people poo poo the suggestions and are adamant that they dont have enough milk , that they cant bf. When in fact MOST of these women can actually but it does really take a lot of perserance and support to get through those first 6 weeks and the points i made above.

So yes that would be my perfect world and one day I hope that through things like these parliamentary submissions that it will one day change so that women can be helped through that inital 6 weeks period..

\*\*of course there are other small barriers along the way but if you can get past the 6weeks mark usually you will have a good bf relationship\*\*

Disclaimer : This is not directed at anyone person in Australia - it is my thoughts on the matter only and in fact I have said these very same things to the midwives when i was in hospital , they are purely my observations..

:)

ETA - I agree with the previous two posters as well - Why people have this pattern of thinking that Giving baby a bottle of Formula will make them through the night I do not know, Formula is heavier and harder to digest than BM , I think it comes from women whos babies were BF , werent settled , couldnt sleep and switched to Formula and then slept but in MOST of those cases its because they werent being fed enough and were hungry hence not sleeping and not settling. Because Breastmilk digests a lot quicker

I also agree heaven forbid that you try to eduate someone on breastfeeding, or give suggestions on how to breastfeed, or to increase supply , or to get through the problems - you are shot down and get labeled a Breast Feeding Nazi or some such thing.

Myself even as a 2cnd time mum went through the usual time frame problems and I STILL Sought help, I spoke to a LC , I spoke to The ABA And I spoke lots of times to Our very own Fiona Jill -just for confidence from these people

You do forget you do lose confidence and you do fret...IT doesnt hurt to ask for help or to receive suggestions..It can only help.. I'm like a sponge I love suggestions...I may have already tried some of them but guaranteed there will be one thing I havent and that can be the trick..

**BellyBelly**

May 23rd, 2007, 04:55 PM

Please don't be afraid of being honest, I am specifically after everyone's personal opinions of their own experiences not a debate or discussion over what someone else has said, and that will be removed if it happens.

I would love to be able to go to parliament and say, 'this is what is happening, this is how they feel, this is what they want.'

There is no right or wrong, what you feel is the key thing here because they want to know what they can do

to help, so they need to know the problems you are facing. I really appreciate your open honesty and I will protect that.

**Liz**

May 23rd, 2007, 05:05 PM

When I mention that Oscar can feed for as long as he likes, some people say "what if you fall pregnant again?", and they are confused when I reiterate "for as long as he likes", because they are under the impression that feeding must cease when pregnant. That's an education issue.

Not to mention that people are shocked that you CAN fall pregnant whilst breastfeeding! When will people learn that it's not an effective contraceptive?? LOL

But I completely agree. I'm facing this almost every day, and it's tiring :( Everyone is expecting me to wean, and are shocked when I say he can feed until he doesn't want it anymore. Mum is slowly putting the pressure on, I think she can't fathom the whole tandem feeding thing. Personally, I'd love Tallon to keep feeding beyond the pregnancy, I'd love for the both of them to share feeding together. If anything I think it would REDUCE jealousy issues, coz he CAN have booby as well as the baby!

Education and just general awareness of these things is crucial. I don't want to sound like I'm blowing my own trumpet, but sometimes I feel like a bit of a pioneer amongst our peers, because I was determined not to have pain relief in labour (nobody believed that was possible and thought I was kidding myself), I KNEW I was going to breastfeed come hell or highwater (but received the "but don't worry if you can't, formula is ok" comments) I even got scoffed at for wanting to use cloth nappies! However, I have achieved each of these things, and seeing our friends and family realise oh, it CAN be done is just a great feeling. Now of course I'm copping it for feeding during a pregnancy. I must admit I put pressure on myself not to fail at these things, coz I know that my doing these things is "educating" my friends, and hopefully they'll stop blurting things out like "oh you can't feed through pregnancy" coz they'll now know someone who has and that it's possible iykwim. Of course if Tallon weans during the pg well, nothing I can do about that! LOL. But I feel like I'm doing my bit by making things work, and helping my friends see that it's possible.

Gosh I hope that didn't all just come across wrong. I'd like to make it clear that none of it has been that easy, and that I'm continually learning.. but I'm proud that we've fed as successfully as we have, and that my being open about it with friends is helping them too. My biggest hope is that all the horrible discouraging comments that they made to me during my pregnancy, won't be in their vocab anymore when it's time for their daughters to have babies.

**rylansmum**

May 23rd, 2007, 05:05 PM

I think it is the fact that women think it will all happen within the first couple of days...(i actually thought the first couple of hours ) and when it doesnt they feel as though they have failed (i know i did).

I got so stressed that i couldnt breastfeed i was a hysterical mess and gave up after 2 weeks because DS wasnt latching on correctly and i had terribly cracked nipples.

Having only 4 weeks to go with DD i have done alot more research and asked for refferals to breastfeed clinics and lactation consultants.

**no3onboard**

May 23rd, 2007, 05:39 PM

My daughter(baby #3) turns 2 months old today. And I am a membe of another online community which isgrouped by birth month, so I am presently privy to several "new mums" and their journeys with breastfeeding experiences, plus myown experiences and general awareness since I became a Mum in 1999. With the "other forum" I participate in (March 2007) I am surprised/saddened at the number of Mums giving/given up feeding already.

I had various signicant early feeding difficulties with my 1st baby (recently turned 8) and despite the advice of midwives to bottle feed (while still in hospital) I refused to supplement with formula and went on to breastfeed him for 2.5 years, and he gained weight beautifully too. I think what got me through the early weeks of difficuly was my absolute desire to breastfeed because I knew if was best - by far. I had had a difficult birth, and there was no way I was going to muck up breastfeeding as well.

So I would have to nominate lack of education, purely because I think just about all women are aware "breast is best", but despite this awareness many, many women also believe that artificial feeding is also 'fine'/'almost as good'/'better for their sanity'/'beats sleeplessness'/'okay to do when breastfeeding is hard'. We often hear "I was bottlefed and I'm fine" etc. And, "He had three days/weeks/months of breastmilk, so that's better than nothing." And while it is better than nothing, it would be great if mothers were highly motivated to breastfeed long term.

I also think that health professionals, when faced with a tired, tearful, sick (mastitis the third time) mothers often 'take pity' despite their training. Goodness only knows I probably would too. It must be hard to say "Yes, I know, but in three more weeks everything will be fine, these days of cracked nipples/poor weight gain/bouts of mastitis will be a fading memory" to a woman presenting sick/tearful/afraid/exhausted.

Here's my list of reasons in order...

Lack of education (inspiration)  
 Health professionals  
 Accessibility of artificial milk  
 Family and friends advice (esp grandmothers and partners)  
 Conflicting Advice/Lack of continuity of care (though this may be a blessing depending on care)  
 Lack of availability/affordability of support  
 Interventions at birth  
 Going back to work bf support  
 Marketing fo artificial milk

Thanks for the opportunity to contribute.

Regards - Jo  
 Mother of three, long-term breastfeeder and since March '07, a homebirther too!

**SallyJ**

May 23rd, 2007, 05:47 PM

It's hard to single out just one - I eventually settled for lack of support going back to work, because that's where a lot of people I know have come unstuck. I think education is important too, and on reflection it's probably the crux of the problem.

For me it's a no-brainer and worth the effort, but some people seem to think it is all too hard.

**caro**

May 23rd, 2007, 06:18 PM

My daughter(baby #3) turns 2 months old today. And I am a membe of another online community which isgrouped by birth month, so I am presently privy to several "new mums" and their journeys with breastfeeding experiences, plus myown experiences and general awareness since I became a Mum in 1999. With the "other forum" I participate in (March 2007) I am surprised/saddened at the number of Mums giving/given up feeding already.

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WOW you could be telling my story to a cerrtain degree anyway !! Lots of that sounded like me and what i felt !!

I cant believe how midwives in hospital immediately say "give a dummy" Or how about we take him to the nursery and give him a bottle"

Even my OB said why dont you let them take him and give him a bottle if it means you'll get some sleep

FFS ! I was so PEEVED At him (amongst a few other reasons - and first time ever after 2 births )

I didnt have any sleep for 4 days straight - no joke ! but i was buggedger if I wasnt going to BF him. The 1st two nights werent from that reason but the 3rd day and 4th day were - due to engorgement

With the help of a LC in the day time and a wonderful midwife on the grave shift I overcame engorgement and pushed through that barrier

Did anyone else find that the graveyard night time shift midwives ie 11pm to 7am were the most unsupportive ? I did with both births (same hospital) I HATED The nights They were the ones who kept pushing dummies and formula and were the least supportive , and yelled at you (almost) and man handled your boobs and baby. YES I spent many nights in tears with both births -

The time when you need the support the most in the middle of the night when its quiet and dark and you feel all alone with your baby and all they want to do is whisk baby off to the nursery and leave you even more alone !

UNTIL I complained - The 2cnd time around that is - and The NUM put the most supportive midwives who were on duty in charge of my room and they were wonderful. so the last few nights spent there were fine.

So yes Better Support in the night time at hospitals would be another good point

**tanby**

May 23rd, 2007, 06:32 PM

W

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So yes Better Support in the night time at hospitals would be another good point

I went to a birthing centre, and wow was the "support" great! At first i hated the midwives because they came in every 10 mins after the birth and for the whole 24 hours i was there and kept telling me to put lucas on the boob. I was so exhausted i couldn't keep my eyes open and kept asking if i could feed him later, but they persisted saying that the only way to get a good milk supply was to CONSTANTLY put him on the boob in that first 48 hours. So i did, I didn't sleep for days. But by day 3 boy did i have a milk supply! I think when people complain of not having much milk in some cases they just need to keep putting the baby on, i know i needed some firm people around reminding me.

And the support needs to continue when you get home. I'm so lucky my dh was so for me breastfeeding, that many a time in the middle of the night when i was feeding him every 15 mins or so, i was so tired i thought i was going to die and in tears, my dh said "this isn't going to last forever, you just need to do this now, its best for him" and i kept going. If i didn't have him supporting me in that way then i might have given up. The continuous breastfeeding sure is tiring. I think people don't realise how tiring it is. I'm so glad i persisted though.

**Ryn**

May 23rd, 2007, 06:37 PM

Oooh no, the night midwives were better - the day midwife was a b\*tch though. It was a nighttime midwife who spend a couple of hours sat with me helping to get DS on where everyone else ignored the issue and pushed formula. Everyone told me I was holding DS wrong, so tried to adjust him - he feeds best the way I instinctively held him, still feeds like that now. He doesn't do the latch-on mouth either, taking him off because he didn't do the mouth was unhelpful - we just needed to trust each other that I'd not mess around with his feeds and he'd feed fine.

I'm very lucky that our special care until were fab too - they promoted expressed milk when DS needed an NG tube and encouraged me to not have him in the nursery when the tube came out - not that I needed encouragement!

I agree with a lot of PPs - why do FF mummies tell BF mummies pre-baby that BF is too hard and discourage us? What if BF mummies told off and mocked FF mummies?

**Liz**

May 23rd, 2007, 07:09 PM

Yep - night time staff were awful. Ringing the buzzer was a waste of time - it was always the temp nurses, not even midwives and lc's! I reported it to my OB who has a large stake in the hospital, dunno if he's done anything about it. Admittedly I could walk down to the nursery and see an LC (well, that's if she was there), but it's much more private to be helped in your own room!

**kezza4**

May 23rd, 2007, 07:29 PM

I think there's a definite lack of education of breastfeeding & how to do it!!!! Yes, I did attend antenatal classes but the one on breastfeeding was deferred & I'd given birth by then!!!! I was extremely naive thinking that it was natural & that there was nothing to it at all. Raised on a farm watching calves & lambs & kittens & puppies.....I mean, no one shows them how to do it!!!! It's completely 100% natural!!!! I had the birth from hell.....I had PPH [post partum haemorrhage] losing at least 2.5 litres of blood immediately after delivery. I was in no physical condition whatsoever to breastfeed. I was literally unable to even lift my own finger!!! 36 hours later I was given 2 units of blood ie. blood transfusion however I believe I could have done with twice that amount. Because of everything that had happened I was induced, dd was born 15 days early etc she was also jaundiced & I think around day 4 or 5 had to go into an isolette. I also moved from the birthing hospital

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36 hours later I was given 2 units of blood ie. blood transfusion however I believe I could have done with twice that amount.

Because of everything that had happened I was induced, dd was born 15 days early etc she was also jaundiced & I think around day 4 or 5 had to go into an isolette. I also moved from the birthing hospital

back to my 'home' hospital [bad mistake that was].

The midwives at the first hospital gave conflicting advice as to what to do. I had huge probs with dd latching properly. Please also remember I was battling to even hold my own newborn baby!!!!!!

As previously mentioned, moving back to my 'home' hospital was something we really lived to regret. DD wasn't gaining weight & we were having ongoing issues with her latching pretty much refusing my left breast altogether. One '\*\*\*\*\*' of a midwife kept on giving her water!!!!!!!!!!!!!! As if that was helping us!!!!!! Later on I told her to stop giving her water & she went off at me saying that as far as she was concerned I was starving my child!!!!!!!!!!!!!! And yet she was the \*\*\*\*\* giving her water all the time!!!!!!

Pretty much everything had gone wrong it really had. For those of you who don't know, aren't aware, after having PPH there IS genuine difficulty re breastfeeding for obvious reasons. Your body has been through hell literally!!!

For us there was lack of sleep, lack of support, lack of care.....honestly the midwives/nurses were pretty much no use at all. I loved one of the night nurses though with midwife experience. She was honest & down to earth & said to me during the early hours one morning when I was having probs yet again with Krystalee feeding from the left breast.....that she'd had the same thing with her own son & actually continued to feed from the one breast only. And, it wasn't a problem at all!!! She also said the sooner I could get home to my own routine the better.

I was in 'jail' for 10 days!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I was that stressed out about my ability to breastfeed at home, alone.....that I even bought gear to express etc. The funny thing was, the minute we were home dd fed from my left breast!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I had midwives grabbing at my nipples.....telling me to do this.....hold dd like that etc etc etc. 99% of them didn't 'consider' what I'd been through & why I was having so many problems & combined with a jaundiced baby [they like to sleep all the time] we of course were having many many issues to deal with. The 1 night nurse whom I did like even said to me, in years gone by, I would have been 1 of those women who actually died from childbirth!!!

I wish 'all' midwives not just some of them, had compassion & understanding. I don't really care that they do this day in & day out. It's their job. I don't care that some women have absolutely no problems breastfeeding & therefore supposedly all women should be the same.....'cos we're not!!!! We're all individuals & we're all unique. We shouldn't be made to feel guilty, like failues, like there's something wrong with us etc if we are experiencing probs with breastfeeding.

BTW, I went on to breastfeed for 18 months!!!! For the first 3 months I felt like quitting every single day. It was painful. It was hard. It was time consuming. I was extremely drained & in poor physical condition. Extremely sleep deprived, in the first few weeks, having to breastfeed 24/7 every single 3 hours 'cos of dd's jaundice.

Without my husband's support, he was actually my carer in hospital I would never have made it!!! He was my rock & my only rock!!!!!! DD made the decision to wean at 18 months. After everything that I'd been through I would have kept going for much longer if she had wanted it!!!!

I also miss it now!!!!!! Once she stopped breastfeeding so often & for so long, probably once solids started at 6 months, it was definitely a lot more enjoyable. There is a distinct lack of support & respect towards breastfeeding mothers in society!!!

OK enough from me!!!!!!!!!! I've probably gone off-track a bit here & there, but I suppose the main thing is more education, more 'consistency' with what midwives say & do, more support & more compassion & empathy!!!

Kerry

**caro**

May 23rd, 2007, 07:37 PM

I had midwives grabbing at my nipples.....telling me to do this.....hold dd like that etc etc etc. 99% of them didn't 'consider' what I'd been through & why I was having so many problems & combined with a jaundiced baby [they like to sleep all the time] we of course were having many many issues to deal with. The 1 night nurse whom I did like even said to me, in years gone by, I would have been 1 of those women who actually died from childbirth!!!

AGH i hate hearing these stories.

With my first DD She had a vaumn as she was stuck , she was posterior and stuck on my hip bone inside. The vacuum caused the \*jelly head\* bruising as well on the back of her head.

She was in ICU For 2 nights

I was expressing for her down in ICU When she was returned to the room i had midwives trying to help me BF

I will NEVER Forget a couple of them - Who grabbed my poor babies back of her head and was pushing her on to my nipple back and forth back and forth trying to make her latch.

I had tears STREAMING down my face.

It was my first baby I didnt know how to stand up for myself AGAINST All the hormones raging inside me that is (normally I would!!)

It broke my heart I was so devastated

(too cut a long story short) Again the LC's came to me and got me breastfeeding.

LC's should be mandatory 24x7 in hospitals (obviously not the same one all the time LOL)

Still breaks my heart to think of them pushing my babys head on like that

Oh and the grabbing of my boobs !

**Bathsheba**

May 23rd, 2007, 07:46 PM

Yep, night nurses weren't as helpful in my experience either.... that applies to when I was in hospital for other reasons (knee surgery) as well. That was probably a bit off topic but I also just wanted to say that I agree with uniformity of advice as well... I know every mum is different but there should at least be an agreed-upon set of successful strategies to use with mums who are having difficulty with feeding... at the moment it seems like this just doesn't exist.

I'm also really starting to feel curious as to what a full-on BFing education campaign could achieve... you know, with schools/ TV commercials/ popular magazine notices etc... not just the current posters and booklets but a more mass media presence. Would people simply get defensive? Could it really make a difference? Think about other community education campaigns: smoking/drink driving/domestic violence... how effective have they been? I'm not saying they have or have not been effective but how long would it take to make a difference? A generation? I guess incorporating BFing education into the school curriculum would have the greatest chance of success in changing the current trends... (just thinking aloud at this point). What I would love to see also is the de-sexualisation of breasts for the BFing mum... but how on earth can we dismantle generations of voyerism of breasts for a "bit of a thrill".... but I guess I'm just sick of sex being thrust (excuse the pun) at us all the time... it's so damaging for us as a society on so many levels.

**maz**

May 23rd, 2007, 07:57 PM

My gf's and I had this discussion not long ago. We thought that the reason a lot of 'mummys' dont bf is due to the shortened length of stay in hospital (12 hours in some cases).

eg

When I had NIkoiaus I was out within 3 days after having an emergancy c/s after a long 23hour labour. I was confussed, lacked the support of so called health professions and felt very depressed about what had happened. I also had no milk and dint realise that it came in around day 3 -4. Hench, I didnt BF and choice to FF instead.

Wilhelm,...hm I thought, IM not going down the same road again, had loads of milk and yet the nurses failed to help me bf. another ff baby.

Vyolett, I demanded that I got Vy in recovery and put her straight on my boob. I had the best midwife possible. I voiced my concerns about not being able to bf my 2 boys and she helped me all the way. She sat with me for hours and helped me with gentle words and motivating praise. I stayed in hospital for 5 days and the whole time my midwife pushed for me to stay until I could bf Vy correctly and felt comfortable within myself.

I managed to bf Vy for one month when I got mastites in both bb's and decided through lack of community MCHN support that i could no longer do 'this'.

Does that mean im going to not try for my fourth? NO WAY! my goloshies will be hauled out and made to do what the great man invented them to do.

Do you know who has supported me the whole way through my bf experience with Vy???? All the wonderful girls on Belly belly, thats who.

Mauw

**Flea**

May 23rd, 2007, 08:05 PM

Does that mean im going to not try for my fourth? NO WAY! my goloshies will be hauled out and made to do what the great man invented them to do.

LOL Maz that made me laugh out loud :lol:

But your story shows what a difference a committed, supportive midwife providing consistent one-on-one care can make. Kudos to her (and you ;) )

**Ryn**

May 23rd, 2007, 08:15 PM

Oh and the grabbing of my boobs !

And then the "do you mind?" well, bit late for that one now, darling!

I think all new mums should have a woman who has successfully BFed and knows how to stand up to those evil midwives who seem to want us to all get PND on hand all day! Or maybe a team of us LOL. That would have helped me a lot.



**tinablueyes**

May 23rd, 2007, 09:03 PM


I would have to say lack of education. I always wanted to breast feed because I know that it is the best option for baby. However I was also lucky enough to be aware in advance that not everyone can. At our ante-natal class a whole 2 hour session was dedicated to breastfeeding. This entailed during a breast on an inflated condom complete with milkducts etc. It was emphasised that it was natural and the best thing to do. However at no point was it mentioned that lots of mothers have problems, not every baby gets it straight away, it was just implied that it was easy. When my darling son was born he couldn't attach properly and we had real problems. It turned out that I had flat nipples. I was very lucky that I had some good midwives in hospital but they all had their own ways of doing things. We persevered and I was kept in for 4 days to try and resolve the situation. We were sent home and he still wasn't really getting the hang of it. I had 2 EMS visits from midwives who both helped me with the breast feeding and took the time to help. However from that point on I was on my own, we went backwards because he forgot how to attach and couldn't feed. At this point I phoned my community health centre who told me they could fit me in for an appointment in 8 days. I phoned the maternity ward and explained the situation and was lucky to speak to a lactation consultant who brought me back in and spent 1.5 hours with me showing me and emphasising that the fact that I was still trying to breastfeed after mastitis, cracked and bleeding nipples, flat nipples and no support from the clinic was a real credit to me. Thanks to her help we persevered and have now mastered it - though only by using a nipple shield. My DS is gaining weight and is happy. We need more lactation consultants in the system and way more support once you get home. It is too easy to quit and switch to formula - which incidentally is exactly what my doctor told me to do after 5 minute consultation. There also needs to be a lot more information about how it is not easy, it doesn't happen overnight and you are not a failure if it doesn't happen immediately. That was how I felt but thankfully I did find good supportive midwives, but they are overworked and underappreciated. More are needed.

Sorry that's me saying my piece!  
Joanne

**Claire**

May 23rd, 2007, 09:10 PM

Lack of education all round.

 My experience of starting out in breastfeeding was difficult. My daughter was whisked away to NICU and then special care. No one told me I could breastfeed her (a lady made a comment along the lines of you weren't here so we gave her formula). I was devastated and knew I had to do something. So I initialised breastfeeding and comp fed until day 3 when she was discharged to ante-natal and I weaned her off the bottle, unto the cup, onto the breast using a nipple shield (told I had flat nipples) and then off breast shields. The whole time refusing to be discharged until I felt ready. Amazed when I think back, that we actually achieved a breastfeeding relationship and maintained it until recently.

My experience of the midwifery staff was like most I think; some made sense to me and others gave random advice and didn't look like they even wanted to be there. My head midwife commented on my breastfeeding without having read my file and left me feeling very deflated and lacking in confidence. But she was the only one really, everyone else did their best to help even though it was conflicting advice at times.

**Danni**

May 23rd, 2007, 09:12 PM

im sorry i dont have time to read back through the posts....but has anyone mentioned the lack of public acceptance in regards to breast feeding?

**karenmc**

May 23rd, 2007, 09:28 PM

This is a hard decision. Definitely think lack of education, lack of continuity of care and conflicting advice after birth are the main ones and they definitely overlap. The continuity of care got my vote - though I would add that the continuity should be with a known midwife/LC who is educated & skilled at breastfeeding support....not someone who didn't have the training! As a naturopath, I have definitely seen the benefits of women who I have referred to private LCs....providing that wonderful ongoing care and advice over the first few difficult weeks with feeding. I have also seen too many who have stopped breastfeeding due to all sorts of reasons (not enough milk, poor weight gain, pain etc) that I firmly believe more came down to poor education and lack of support from both family/friends and health professionals. The ones who persevere despite enormous difficulties (I can include myself here) are the ones who are educated and passionate about the benefits of breastfeeding for their baby. We need more women in the antenatal setting to get the education because in the postnatal setting it is often too late.  
Good luck with the government inquiry! Karen x

**MelanieR**

May 23rd, 2007, 09:41 PM

Reading some of the other experiences makes me really sad. When I was having the problems with Jack attaching due to his tongue-tie, I was asked if I was ready to go home after 4 nights. At that stage he

wouldn't attach (but I was told my nipples were the problem not the tongue-tie) so I was expressing. Then at each feed, with a mw or lc helping, I would try to attach a starving, screaming baby causing him to become more and more distressed. Then I would feed him the EBM in a bottle and express again. I was exhausted and I told them I wanted to stay an extra night to try and get the feeding working. I was obviously very lucky as I was told I could stay, and at midnight on that last night, the mw that delivered Jack finally got him to attach with nipple shields. So at least by the time I went home I was able to bf. As I mentioned in my pp, it was 3 weeks later that I discovered that the tongue-tie was the real problem, got it snipped and went on to successfully feed without nipple shields for 14 months (then he self weaned :( ). The point of this post is that I can't imagine how I could have managed if I'd been sent home before the feeding with nipple shields was established. I can only imagine that despite my determination to bf, I too would quite likely have ended up ffeeding. It's so easy to see how it happens.

**Liz**

May 23rd, 2007, 10:02 PM

I think all new mums should have a woman who has successfully BFed and knows how to stand up to those evil midwives who seem to want us to all get PND on hand all day! Or maybe a team of us LOL. That would have helped me a lot.

Do you know who has supported me the whole way through my bf experience with Vy???? All the wonderful girls on Belly belly, thats who.

Maybe we need BB visiting rosters LOL. A few b/f mums go and visit the new BB mums at hussy and help sort through all the nonsense from the midwives, and LC's for that matter too.. they all gave me different advice too.

I agree with the uniformity of advice too. Chopping and changing feeding positions each feed etc coz of different advice doesn't help anyone. At least give one method a good try before trying the next iykwim. Everything needs practice. There's not usually some magic position that will suddenly work.

**BellyBelly**

May 23rd, 2007, 10:07 PM

I loOooooove your ticker pic Liz... I get all warm and fluffy every time I see it. Waaaah I am going to be past that soon!!!!

**Liz**

May 23rd, 2007, 10:09 PM

Aww thanks Kelly! I was pretty thrilled myself when I found it on the camera LOL. I totally forgot DH had taken it.

**Carly54**

May 23rd, 2007, 10:15 PM

Definately the accessibility of artificial milk!!! it wouldn't matter how uneducated people were if artificial milk wasn't accessible then bf would be the first port of call for feeding options. My first baby wouldn't go on the breast from day one - even after every midwife in the place came and had a go... by day three he needed to eat so I had to give him expressed breastmilk, then of course I had to keep giving him a bottle as he very quickly got used to the teat instead of my breast... it was AWFUL!

Even going to the daystay on day 6 was a nightmare, the midwife couldn't get him on and at the end of the day sent me home saying offer breast every 3 - 4 hours... knowing he wasn't going on AT ALL... let me tell you, I should have put him on formula right then and there - I feel that midwife should have informed me about formula!!

After 2 weeks of expressing every single feed for him, I chose to go and buy one of those ugly tins... however lack of education meant that I didn't know which tin to choose! I have never seen an ad for formula and seeing all of the different types was way too much to bear, if I saw that it said ARTIFICIAL MILK, it would have been even more upsetting to me than it already was! I thought I would NEVER give a child milk in a tin.

Please remember that some mothers do want to breastfeed but simply cannot.

**Melly01**

May 23rd, 2007, 10:21 PM

I think lack of education, but honestly all of the choices can be big contributing factors..

It was so sad a few months ago at my young mothers group, a girl was having issues with breast feeding, and instead of trying to listen to her and support her, because she seemed to desperately want to BF, the girls she were talking to were saying things like "I saw a show about breastfeeding that said that formula is actually more nourishing than breast milk, so there is no need for you to even bother with it". I have never

really "fitted in" there so I didn't think it was my place to barge in.

I actually used to get stares from them when I was BF DS when he was 12 months old. I almost felt like a leper or something. Also the MCHN who would come to weigh our babies told me DS wasn't gaining enough weight for his age (then 11months) (he had just been ill and had also recently started crawling so I thought that was the reason. I explained it to her, but she didn't seem to think anything I was saying was valid.) and that I should drop his feeds and replace them with formula. I just felt like I as trying to do what I wanted to do for DS and was being discouraged by people.

But on the upside, when DS was a few weeks old and my nipples were cracked, bleeding and bruised, I was crying during every feed and wanting to give it all up. The support of my family and exs family helped me get through it. Plus my determination that no matter how hard it got (I was told it wouldn't be easy, DS & I both had to learn how to BF, after all) I would do what I personally believed to be the best option for both of us.

~Saram~

May 23rd, 2007, 10:27 PM

Kelly, I can't believe the number of mums I meet these days that are bottle feeding and tell me there milk dried up at 6wks, esp younger mums (17-25) I think the ABA needs to give out a pamphlet that addresses this and put it in the bounty bag or something. In my experience it is usually the mothers and grandmothers who tell these mums that their milk dried up at the same time, don't worry dear not everyone can breastfeed, and now I can give the baby a bottle!

Renee Elizabeth

May 23rd, 2007, 10:40 PM

I voted for lack of support from family, friends etc. I was lucky in that I educated myself about breastfeeding and had a supportive husband. I also had two close friends (who unfortunately lived many hours away!) but were breastfeeding when I started to feed Marnie. I was often told that I didn't have enough milk or How did I know how much she was getting with each feed? I was also told that I wouldn't be able to continue if I returned to work - I did and introduced my work place to breastfeeding mother's rights.

Mothers of the past have a lot of influence on new mums and perhaps they are the ones who need the education? I currently have a friend now who breastfeeds but is too embaressed to breastfeed in public and expresses for each feed?????? This alarms me - where is the stigma coming from?

IK

May 23rd, 2007, 10:46 PM

Carly, it has been mentioned quite a few times here in this thread that we are talking about the people who CAN BF but don't :) They're the ones whose reasons could give us clues as to where the education needs to start, be directed etc. This thread is not intended to make anyone feel inadequate, it's asking a valid question. We need to be able to talk about so that it becomes less of a mystery for mummies.

I know of a woman who tried BFing for less than a week and went to formula because 'it hurt' to BF... as if it's a walk in the park for the rest of us! She had her second baby and didn't think twice, just put her onto formula and EBM - won't bother with actual breastfeeding because 'it hurts too much'. Everyone dances around her so as not to cause offence, so when I realised one day that I'd turned up to a get together wearing my 'I make milk...what's your superpower?' t-shirt, I felt like a walking criticism. Why? Why can't I be proud of what I do for my son? Why can't I be proud about getting through 4 excruciating weeks of tongue-tie, oversupply, grazed and bleeding nipples, humungous boobs? I DID feel like a superpower. And I refuse to condescend to women who don't BF, for whatever reason (as in, I feel it would be patronising to FFeders to consciously cut it out of my conversation or talk it down whilst feeding DS, as if they need to be protected from real life!). I'm not going to second-guess their reasons, it's up to them. But at the same time, I'm not going to shrink away from the fact that I've done this magical thing for my boy, out of some misplaced guilt that someone else couldn't. Geez, that's like pretending I don't have a son when I know I'm going to be talking to someone who is dealing with infertility or miscarriage...or someone who has lost a child of any age.

Sorry, that's a bit of a tangent, but it IS related. We seem to feel the need to downplay how great it is to breastfeed in order to be inoffensive. We need to get past that or there are women who will miss out on that *anecdotal evidence*, they won't have that in the backs of their minds when they are going through that initial attachment period and other people's success stories won't get them through that because they won't have heard many. They'll be hearing an apologetic 'but it's just as fine if you feed formula'. Cos it's not. Formula can be fed instead of BM where it is not possible to feed BM, but it will never be anywhere near LIKE BM, and no amount of apologising is going to erase that fact.

That's what I mean about a rock and a hard place. Exalt Bfing and dump the guilts on FF mummies :rolleyes:

BlissfulMai

May 23rd, 2007, 10:46 PM

Timing!

We have just gotten home from Antenatal Class number 3 of 4...all about breastfeeding!

The Family Birthing Centre at the Mercy in Melbourne encourages breastfeeding, we had a thorough Q&A followed by a detailed video.

I voted for lack of support/returning to work... cost of living, taking us away from our children...but I would also say that what we are used to seeing we get used to the idea of...and with this overwhelming consumer society we live in, with all the marketing and advertising, why wouldnt women accept formula as a normal way of feeding our children? They claim to be equal to if not better suited than breastmilk... so does this also come under misleading or inadequate information? Are we able to trust Australian Standards of Practice and Advertising to deliver us good, healthy products?

I question this when some ads tell us that sugar coated chocolate breakfast cereals are good for us...ya know?

All the very best for addressing this topic.

I look forward to hearing the outcome.

**mjg326362**

May 23rd, 2007, 10:55 PM

Wow! This really touches a nerve.....

I had to say education firstly.....if I knew then what I know now, I would have definitely stuck it out! Nobody told me that c-sections can delay your milk coming in.....I didn't know it can take up to 6 weeks to get successfully established.....no-one I knew was b/f so didn't have anyone to ask about it beforehand.....DD was born on a Sunday and I stuck it out 'til Friday then packed it in. Hubby was supportive of me either way, didn't try to influence me. I had the L/C in to visit, midwives trying to help, pumping away merrily.....

Having said that, the nurses in my ward had a policy of not showing you how to make up bottles if you were trying to get b/f established. It was only after I made my final decision that they took me along and showed me what I needed to do, so didn't feel any pressure from that angle.

With a bit of experience behind me, and a WEALTH of knowledge now, I'm definitely going to give it a go if I'm lucky enough again.....

As for "artificial milk"? If it wasn't available, there sure would be some hungry babies and suicidal mummies around.....not everyone gives up because it's "easier".

**Gigi**

May 23rd, 2007, 11:35 PM

actually, my answer wasn't one of the options.

so i voted for Intervention at birth cos that my 2nd reason. I think when babies are whisked away from the mum to the nursery, a vital bonding and feeding opportunity are lost. When a mother has just had an epidural and all the other things you get put in your system for a c-section, well all that stuff interferes with you being able to feed your bub (if you are even awake). Colostrum can't be undervalued, it IS gold.

OK, my #1 reason for b/f-ing not happening more?

Acceptance in the community.

When i go out in public places, i don't feel like i have somewhere comfy to breastfeed, i don't feel welcome in that way.

Public changerooms might have an old armchair if you are lucky, and they are situated near the sanitary boxes of used "full" disposable nappies, the smell makes me gag and i don't want to be feeding my child near human faeces. So i don't b/f in the parents room. Where else? The shopping centres have wooden benches in the middles of the walkways. So somewhere to feed, very public and absolutely no back support. I feel like a drink while i feed so i find a cafe. The trend is to have hard wooden dining chairs, no arm rests to help me feed my baby.

But the mum who hands her baby's bottle over to heat up in the cafe's microwave, that seems to be much more socially acceptable.

i am going to breastfeed my baby IN SPITE of feeling unwelcome wherever i go in public when i want to feed my bub. I think of the long term health benefits for my baby. Only last year, it became law in my state, that a woman could feed in a eating establishment. Up until last year, it wasn't law. It was up to the discretion of the individual restarant or cafe owner. if a customer complained, you would be asked to leave.

You get told how good it is for the baby, but i didn't realise i would feel "punished" by society for actually carrying out this good thing for my baby. Pressured to put baby on solids so early. My bub is six months old, not showing any signs of wanting solids, yet people around me can't stop talking about the solids.

The fact i have an extrememly healthy bub who hasn't had gastro, a cold or anything like that in six months - does that not count???

It was not easy to start breastfeeding, i endured alot of pain at first. It sure wasn't natural for me, glad i perservered but god it was hard.

being without my car for the first six months of my bub's life has been hard, can't get to ABA support meetings. I need that support to feel good about my choice.

**amy&rafi**

May 23rd, 2007, 11:37 PM

I voted for lack of support/returning to work... cost of living, taking us away from our children...but I would also say that what we are used to seeing we get used to the idea of...and with this overwhelming consumer society we live in, with all the marketing and advertising, why wouldnt women accept formula as a normal way of feeing our children?

i find this a bit of a contradiction...

i don't really feel the cost of living is taking us from our children- we can choose whether we are going to put them in daycare and continue with the standard of living we had before we had children- or we can choose to downsize a little and look after them ourselves.

the only thing we have gotten too used to seeing is women returning to the workforce while they still have small children rather staying at home with them and choosing a simpler lifestyle... the overwhelming consumer society we live in promotes a working mother and father and the children miss out on much more then breastmilk.... we are choosing to accept alot worse things then formula as the normal way of feeding our children- we are accepting daycare workers to care and norish our little ones while we are away playing the socially acceptable 'working mother' role.

breastfeeding friendly workplaces are definatly a good thing- however the lack of them is not a problem- the fact that mum's are back in workplaces when they have children young enough to be breastfeeding is... i strongly feel this is a social (and possibly greed) problem, not a workplace one.

**MamaDuke**

May 24th, 2007, 12:28 AM

Definately for me anyway, it was the conflicting advice. Whilst I was in hospital it seemed like every shift change would bring a new way of doing it 'properly' and a throw out of the method I had just been trying. Also, a lot of the midwives I met through my struggles with breastfeeding were rude, uncaring, intimidating and abrupt and in the end I thought 'stuff it, I'm not battling with them any more...I just can't do this' and gave up.

I'm all for breastfeeding and I can understand where they're coming from (the midwives), but they need to be reminded that you catch more flies with honey than vinegar.

Edited to add...No one, not even my friends, told me that it was going to be excrutiatingly painful to begin with!

This, to me, was the world's best kept secret!

**MamaDuke**

May 24th, 2007, 12:41 AM

I know of a woman who tried BFing for less than a week and went to formula because 'it hurt' to BF... as if it's a walk in the park for the rest of us! She had her second baby and didn't think twice, just put her onto formula and EBM - won't bother with actual breastfeeding because 'it hurts too much'. Everyone dances around her so as not to cause offence

See, I along with this other poor mum didn't know this and not once while I was in hospital did ANY health care professional ever say to me that it is going to hurt.

I remember sitting on the chair, toes curled, neck all tense, nipples bleeding, crying my eyes out...I started to resent my baby and absolutely dread feeds.

Maybe the fact that some people are so judgemental stops people like me and this particular lady from seeking advice/help and persevering with it.

**IK**

May 24th, 2007, 12:53 AM

MamaDuke, that is my point exactly - it is unrealistic to say that BFing shouldn't hurt, when in fact it CAN hurt initially! The first time round, for the lady I'm talking about, I can sort of understand where she's coming from. Second time round there isn't much excuse - she is surrounded by BFers and her SIL who had a baby that same year as her the first time continued to BF for 2 and a half years. SIL also had initial attachment issues...for about 6 weeks. There ARE some people who take the 'easy' option (I would only say this if I had heard women say it themselves, which I have), and there are those who believe that they are having undue problems because no-one has told them that it can be hard and it can hurt.

This lady doesn't want help, she does believe that formula is as good as human milk - she has fallen for the spiel from the formula company reps (as she was in the pharmacy industry).  
Not wanting to talk about specific people, though - I brought it up because I believe it is symptomatic.

**BellyBelly**

May 24th, 2007, 12:59 AM

If I can expand a little on the education thing - because I would like to know exactly - what would you like to see in terms of education? Because I know as a first time mother, when I was pregnant, I missed going to the breastfeeding session and wasn't phased by it because I thought I would be able to manage without it and it would be easy. How do you get through to people like that? I think the parenting and breastfeeding side of things becomes more interesting AFTER you have had the baby for many people, so what would you all suggest given this scenario?

**Berry**

May 24th, 2007, 02:40 AM

My thoughts re breastfeeding education question -

Maybe a booklet handed to women giving birth which covers benefits of breastfeeding and ways to overcome typical difficulties, and it would be particularly useful to be given relevant web addresses, ABA contact information - including after hours number, etc.

It helps if the hospital you book in with is "baby-friendly" pro-breastfeeding, because you know that your efforts will be supported and rewarded. My hospital encourages mums to enrol in a breastfeeding class and I found the class wonderful but would have liked a booklet to take away also.

Even though I've breastfed two bubs, I'm eager to have a chance to do the breastfeeding class before I have my third baby as I think refreshers are important too. I think mums who are onto their 2nd/3rd/4th or whatever should be encouraged and praised for breastfeeding too as it seems there is a high BF dropout rate once you've had more than one.

Also, making BF resources more visible for new mums. I remember asking a MCHN, after having my firstborn, how I could link with a local ABA group. I couldn't find ANY information on the health centre noticeboards and she couldn't even find a brochure for me. I was surprised because I know when my mum was breastfeeding the Nursing Mothers' was well-known and accessible to families.

**Phoenix**

May 24th, 2007, 08:05 AM

I really think the lack of education on all fronts could be addressed firstly by advertising. We all see those full page glossy adverts saying if we don't feed our child sugary toddler milks they will be anemic have poor immune systems and lack intelligence.

Maybe a TV ad campaign with celebrities and other mums (Bec cartwright springs to mind) saying that yes it is hard and it can hurt but it is worth it and here is ABA they can help. As well as magazine advertising (not articles because we already get those and lets face it are lot are very contradictory and lack any real info-and many don't mention ABA!). But it needs to come from the government not ABA (just have ABA as a part of it) so people see this as something the government is trying to improve.

Health professionals need to be educated, most are not, the BF rates among Drs and their wives are equal to the rest of society so they are coming up against the same barriers normal women are. Having health professionals that come into contact with pregnant or lactating women being required to hold accreditation in lactation is a must.

In the past few years the UK has taken a big stance in trying to increase the BF rate. The problem is everyone is pushing BF BF BF but there is no skill and support to back them up so babies are being hospitalised right left and centre. So the professionals need to be educated and then society needs to be educated.

I talk about BF at my local hospital antenatal classes. I can tell them until I'm blue in the face that BF is not easy that ABA can help if you have a problem or a q's but I cannot make them BF, I can not overcome when our local Dr tells women with mastitis to quit, I can't undo the harm that their mothers or their sisters who didn't BF do by suggesting the mothers milk is no good. I give the phone numbers, information I include the dads (they have their own handout with things they can do) because a mother is 10 times more likely to BF if her partner supports her, but it doesn't help when those closest to her or the so called professionals say something else then what I have told her.

Sorry blabbered a bit there so education needs to be for health professionals (who can then pass this onto mothers and support her after birth) and then for society (so mothers can BF at work, BF in public, BF until 2 as WHO states etc etc- and not feel discriminated against in any way).

**Cailin**

May 24th, 2007, 08:16 AM

I think as soon as you book into any hospital you should be contacted by the ABA (govt funded) and receive an ABA membership, the ABA can advise you on local meetings in your area and suggest going along so that you can learn about breastfeeding BEFORE you have the baby. There should also be more BF'ing

information in the antenatal classes. I think it would be really helpful for women to go along to ABA meetings when pregnant because often women don't go till either after having bubs or after they start having difficulties. Support should start BEFORE bubs is here. Maybe even have an fully qualified LC that discusses breastfeeding as part of hospital visits? Not to mention education starting in schools way before people are even thinking about having babies. And also for boys too, so that when and if they become dads they know how to support their wives.

I dunno just a few thoughts.

\*hugs\*  
Cailin

**sportychick**

May 24th, 2007, 08:17 AM

I think that one problem is that you are chucked out of the hospital in many cases before your milk comes in. The private hospital I delivered in had a "5 day stay", but DD was born at 9:10pm and I didn't get up to the ward until 11:30 - and that was counted as day one, and you leave at 11 am on day 5. My milk had only just started then. I managed to BF successfully for 7 months (until DD refused) but I think it was just luck and persistence on my part...

**Danni**

May 24th, 2007, 09:12 AM

OK, my #1 reason for b/f-ing not happening more?  
Acceptance in the community.

When i go out in public places, i don't feel like i have somewhere comfy to breastfeed, i don't feel welcome in that way.

YES gigi! that gets my vote too

**Liz**

May 24th, 2007, 09:17 AM

I can not overcome when our local Dr tells women with mastitis to quit, I can't undo the harm that their mothers or their sisters who didn't BF do by suggesting the mothers milk is no good.

Completely agree. Sadly mums and sisters are the WORST for this. My mum even now suggests that Tallon has a cold because my milk isn't nutritious anymore. Argh! Say that to someone who is tired and emotional, and well, any confidence they had left is flushed right down the toilet.

I 'think' I've got through to my mum a bit with regards to her only feeding for 3 months. She DID dry up, but she understands now it was because she was taught not to feed for more than 10 minutes per side, and scheduled the feeds. So she gets the whole demand feed thing now.

I think with regards to education campaigns... gosh, they could do a whole SERIES on busting breastfeeding myths. Tell people what NOT to listen to. I learnt what not to listen to from all the lovely ladies here on BB, from the ABA class, and from the ABA website. (as a result I've ignored LC's, midwives, MCHN's, GP, and mum! LOL - but hey.. we're still feeding!!) I've been fortunate that I haven't had a need for direct contact with the ABA since, but I wouldn't hesitate if I needed them. Women need confidence that they DO know what they're doing, so they can ignore all these silly comments about the milk not being good enough, and that they're starving their baby.

**maz**

May 24th, 2007, 09:28 AM

OMG I totally forgot about the toe curling pain in the first weeks..but still its a little price to pay for knowing that your child is receiving the best you can give.

Danni and Gigi - I remember Jed took me out for brunchs shortly after having Vy at a top notch place here in Shepparton and I BF Vy with many of the women just google eyeing me. It made me feel uncomfortable and a bit embarrassed until one lady came over and said it was a beautiful sight to see a mother b'fing. She put me on a high all day.

Kelly - bet you didnt expect this can of worms PMSL

**Danielle\_M**

May 24th, 2007, 09:40 AM

I picked conflicting advice.

It seems everyone thinks they have the right to tell a new mum what she should be doing. In my experience Brianna was FF pretty much from day one, I tried to BF but due to an operation (breast reduction) a couple of years earlier my milk ducts had been damaged so I couldn't supply any milk to my DD. (although the milk did come in there was no way out).

Brianna was a natural, she attached & sucked quite quickly but I knew something wasn't right, the

midwives kept giving her formula "top ups" & hadn't taken the time to help me see if any milk was coming out... being a first timer I didnt know how to check etc.  
I will be trying to BF again with my next baby as this is what I want to do but if I cant again then so be it, (this time I will definatley be asking more questions & making the midwives do the job their there to do...help the new mums) DD is a very happy & healthy 2 year old & thats all that matters to me...

**smylie**

May 24th, 2007, 10:06 AM

When I was pregnant I bought 3 breastfeeding tops and EVENTUALLY found the breastpads at my local coles for my hospital bag... I was given 2 bottles at my babyshower.

In my mind babies were breastfed unless there was something wrong with my milk.

I HAD no idea so many people had so many problems... but now I think about it... I had not seen alot of babies being fed.

There are so many new babies in the world but we never see them being fed...

WHY DO WE HIDE WHEN WE FEED OUR BABIES???

How are we going to learn if we never see it?

Someone posted that breastfeeding should be in your face while you are watching neighbours i totally agree... then everyone is watching it and it will be NORMAL

At the moment it feels that I am some kind of hero in my circle of friends because i am "still" breastfeeding, some have had cracked nipples and 'couldnt' express 'enough' so 'had' to go to formula, one is so shy had problems and didnt tell anyone almost starved her baby and then after shutting herself away from world to express put bub on formula and thats that, one just thought breastfeeding was weird, wanted to go back to work after 2 weeks and doesnt like getting up at night so formula is 'easier'.

I think more help needs to be available after we get home from hospital, and for it to be a topic that is not a taboo one.... something we can talk about openly if we have a problem.

no one encourages anyone to smoke but everyone is there to help you quit....

no one encourages you to keep breastfeeding because there is nothing wrong with formula.....

**Amym**

May 24th, 2007, 10:07 AM

I think as soon as you book into any hospital you should be contacted by the ABA (govt funded) and receive an ABA membership, the ABA can advise you on local meetings in your area and suggest going along so that you can learn about breastfeeding BEFORE you have the baby. There should also be more BF'ing information in the antenatal classes. I think it would be really helpful for women to go along to ABA meetings when pregnant because often women don't go till either after having bubs or after they start having difficulties. Support should start BEFORE bubs is here. Maybe even have an fully qualified LC that discusses breastfeeding as part of hosptial visits? Not to mention education starting in schools way before people are even thinking about having babies. And also for boys too, so that when and if they become dads they know how to support their wives.

I think you said this perfectly Cailin, why not have it as a normal part of pg, I especially like your sugesstion of having a LC that discusses breastfeeding as part of your regular hospital visits,

I am going through an OB for this baby but I still have a couple of visits with a midwife so why not a visit especially for an LC that way it would be a regualr check up and incorporate BF too I think that is a fantastic idea and I hope that one day they do that, that will most certainly bring education up on BF.

I think advertising is also important, BF is not considered by general public as the normal thing to do, its supposed to be hidden in a closet or a room wayyyyy down a hall in the shopping centre, people are getting offended and making horrible awful remarks to the women who do BF and I think that this needs to stop, if BF was considered the normal thing by society and not a little secret you do behind closed doors then I feel more women would be comfortable feeding in public, I know when BF my DS I would never go out unless I knew he would not want a feed and even then I would only leave the house for a very short time.

IK I am guilty of stopping BF with my DD because it hurt to much, and I think it was because of lack of education as I did not know it was going to be like that, even after BF my DS for 2 months ( I stopped for different reasons ) I still thought it must have been 'me' and something I was doing and it probably was I dont think she was attaching properly, I just wanted to say that it broke my heart to stop with in the first week with her, and I had many abusive phone calls to make sure I didnt forget the horrible thing I was doing to my newborn child, it was not an easy decission for me, but in my case I felt it was better to stop



because of the resentment I was feeling toward my baby girl, I so understand what you are saying and yes I think that some people do turn to formula too early but I think it really depends on the circumstances and reasons behind it, and again education is the key here in most cases, if I had felt that I was not taking up precious time and that I was in the way I may have asked for more help, and I think what Cailin said is spot on :D

ETA: I will be giving it my absolute best effort this time, I won't give up unless there is a medical reason of course, but you see having BB as a place of support and reference I am now more educated than before I had the attitude that breast milk and formula were much the same and felt no need to force the issue with myself but now I do know and again it's an education thing for me, I have learnt so much in the past couple of years, and I am really excited this time about giving it my all.

**alpha**

May 24th, 2007, 10:35 AM

First of all, thank you for doing this Kelly - I am not quite sure where you get the time or energy for all that you do!!

I have to agree with so many of the posts - there are a lot of options to choose from - and I would have to say that many of them are contributing factors to women not pursuing breastfeeding when times get tough. I have had three children and with my two eldest (who are now teenagers) everything came pretty easy - with the exception of cracked nipples (which paw paw cream is great for) and mastitis! If I didn't have the positive experiences with the first two - I might have given up with my third who is now 8 months old and still feeding strongly (in fact it is a little bit of a battle to get him to eat solids). First of all I totally forgot about day 2!!! That was one of the longest days of my life - my little one was feeding constantly and he was obviously in pain - I knew that I only had colostrum at that point - but I started to feel that something was wrong - thank God I had a midwife who came in and told me all was normal. I believe in demand breastfeeding - so when Addison was feeding every 2 hours I felt that I might not have enough milk. My insecurities were not helped by the health professionals - but rather they were made worse - with conflicting advice and some who were just rude! Handling my breasts like they were not a part of my body - but just some object. In the end I closed my door (I gave birth within a hospital) and told everyone to leave me alone. I fed Addison lying down - rather than in the position I was told I must feed him in - and as I relaxed and rested - he relaxed and fed. I had one midwife come in and tell me I was a "clever girl" for feeding him while laying down and another telling me to get up - I told her (in a nice way) to get out.:) The only advice I can give to women who are struggling is to trust in their bodies and to expect that there will be hurdles to overcome - but it is worth it. Breastfeeding is one of the experiences in my life that I have treasured almost every moment of. Even in the middle of the night when I am totally exhausted :)

**BellyBelly**

May 24th, 2007, 10:44 AM

Here (<http://www.bellybelly.com.au/submission.pdf>) is my submission as it still isn't yet online, there seems to be much backlog. As I mentioned it was rushed but I just wanted to get something in, so it isn't my most well-edited piece!

**alpha**

May 24th, 2007, 10:49 AM

Really quick - before I forget - as my brain is prone to do so often. Reading various posts a question has been posted as to why some women are choosing not to feed outright. When I conducted research into childbirth - breastfeeding obviously came up - but it was not central to my research. What I found was the women who chose not to feed did so for one of two reasons. First of all, was aesthetic purposes (they didn't want their breasts to sag). Second, they did not feel comfortable with the idea of breastfeeding - these particular women had a real divide between mind and body if you know what I mean. I think part of this comes from the many images and discourses out there of the faulty body of the woman. So many women just do not feel confidence in their bodies! (I am speaking here about women who choose whilst they are pregnant that they will not breast feed their babies)

**smylie**

May 24th, 2007, 10:55 AM

I don't think a booklet would help... how many booklets and leaflets did you get when you first had baby? or got pregnant... it is overwhelming and goes in a bag until baby is 6 weeks old and you have a chance to take a breath... by this time if you were going to "give up" breast feeding it would have happened by now.

In your face on telly..... get rid of all the freakin knife ads and put something on tv when the new mums are up feeding or trying to feed???

at home education.... a visit from a nurse no matter what week two when maybe it is 'not too late' to help

**Clearbrite**

May 24th, 2007, 10:57 AM

I picked Lack of education, figuring that could cover all bases when it comes to breastfeeding and the

promotion of it.

I was lucky enough to have a fantastic experience with breastfeeding my daughter(not without it's ups and downs of course)and was glad she was a self-weaner at 19months old because i wasn't exactly sure how i was going to stop breastfeeding.

I am a larger women,so of course,having larger breasts made it a challenge to begin with,until i figured out a rolled up towel under the boobs made for great support and allowed our daughter to feed more comfortably.

A shame the nurses felt free to voice their personal comments about a 'fat chick' trying to feed her baby,all along with trying various positions to put my daughter and boobs in.

Already feeling bad enough after having an emergency c-section and a newborn(and 1st baby)to look after,everything aching,boobs so sensitive(and extremely sore when milk come in 3 days after the birth)..did they really wonder why i just burst out crying and said don't worry about it,i'll figure it out myself.

Which we did,just my daughter and i..and from then on,was nothing but a pleasure to be able to breastfeed successfully for her first 19 months.

They(some of the nurses)were just as horrible and nasty to the new mum in the bed next to mine. Not that anyone should ever have to explain themselves,but before she got pregnant,she had suffered from breast cancer(and recovered)and was told that she would probably never have kids due to all the treatment etc.

Miracles,she did fall pregnant with her daughter,but because of the breast cancer and surgery etc her only option was to bottlefed.

Of course,bottlefeeding was a crime punishable by death to the nurses,and not taking the time to find out why she couldn't and didnt want to breastfed, didnt help her with bottlefeeding her baby..who i guess was probably near starving..till about 2 days after the birth.

I think one of her boobs was producing milk a little bit,so at least the baby had a little something,but to be so horrible and nasty and force the women in near tears to tell her story again about the breast cancer before they 'caved in' and helped her with the bottlefeeding and formula..just cant be right either.

Non matter if it's your 1st baby or 10th,each birth still has to be a 'shock' to the system,and a time when you can hardly think straight,and basically,just at your worst,no matter how joyous you are at finally having your baby.

All support and help should be given,no matter what your choice is.

At the end of the day,as long as each and every baby is happy and healthy,that's what matters.

I also feel that breastfeeding should be promoted just the same as formulas are.

There still seems to be this stigma of boobs only being needed for sexual pleasure(or objects)when their real primary function is to be able to breastfeed any children we have.

Once society can look at a mum breastfeeding out in public without staring and having nasty hurtful comments thrown at her,or for a guy to walk into a parents room where a mum is feeding her baby in private and grope her breasts..then we might be getting somewhere..

Now with #2 on the way,i once again cant wait to be able to breastfeed!!

All from a 70's premmie baby who was bottlefed.

Perhaps teaching and letting mums know to trust in their instincts when it comes in looking after their babies would help too.

I had never held a baby until i held my daughter,had nothing to do with other babies or kids when growing up,and had only ever mostly seen babies being bottlefed when out and about..i think it was a great surprise,and so rewarding to realise that i could actually breastfeed successfully,and i can only hope that the skill will be passed onto my daughter,and that my son in the future will support his wife in breastfeeding

I think the more kids/people exposed to mother breastfeeding their kids where ever and when ever can only be a good thing..cause once it's seen as 'normal'(which it is of course..)and routine..sooner or later,there has to come a time where nobody will even blink and eyelid at seeing mothers breastfeed..the same as if a baby is being bottlefed.

<http://bd.lilypie.com/kW8Lp10/.png> (<http://lilypie.com>)  
<http://b5.lilypie.com/fMMop10/.png> (<http://lilypie.com>)

**Phoenix**

May 24th, 2007, 11:08 AM

Brilliant submission Kelly.

I was fortunate enough to attend the hearing the committee had in Cairns. It was very informative (both good and bad in some ways) and all the members of the public got to say their 2 cents worth at the end. At that time the committee had received over 350 submissions and despite the feb 28th Deadline they were still accepting submissions. they admitted that when they started this inquiry they beleived it would be quick easy and over in 6 mths, they expected about 100 submissions. hehehe they got a big shock I think!!! I was lucky I was able to get mine in early and has been up for a while now. I'm still trying to read through the rest-I'm up to 277.

Oh and completely agree with Cailin.

In Innisfail a breastfeeding counsellor started a program where she talked with all expectant mothers about BF-after a while no more funding so it had to be stopped. Some refused to see her, some came to groups and some rang when they needed help. What has been a bigger success has been the Breastfeeding Education Classes where people pay \$70 and get a membership, a book and undertake a class (about 1/2 day I think) learning about BF. This should be something the government can do. Make private health funds pay for their members to do this course, fund low income and at risk groups to do the course and for everyone else make it a tax deduction if they do it.

**Kirsty77**

May 24th, 2007, 11:09 AM

With Gemma is was lack of support from health professionals who told me it should come naturally and had me sobbing one night.

With jasmine she had problems sucking and latching on so lack of support again to help me with teaching Jasmine how to latch on properly. The Midwife tried to help me but after a couple of hours on and off of Jasmine crying she told me to just ff.

**Clearbrite**

May 24th, 2007, 11:21 AM

I love the suggestion of all mothers being given a free 12 month subscription to ABA!

I have had to go to the FMAU a couple of times already(and have to go again tomorrow!)

FMAU=Fetal Monitoring Assessment Unit. Over 4 hours they take your blood pressure average,take some blood and get out on the baby monitor for their heartbeat/movements just to make sure everything is AOK

Anyhow,the ABA is offering a breastfeeding class over a weekend for 1st time mums(well,i guess any mum really)to learn about breastfeeding,what to expect etc..all for \$95!

Of course that includes a years membership.

That's all fine and well,anything to promote and help out with mums breastfeeding is only a great thing..but to be 'suckered in' to paying for something that somes free and naturally..i dont know..kinda runs me the wrong way.

I think ABA should give(or offer)a years membership to all mums(no matter what number child)for free,then only if you decide to stay for longer then that year do you pay a membership fee(im sure they need financial help too to keep things going)

We,as Australians can get most medical things(and especially when having a baby)for free on Medicare..so why not also have membership to ABA on Medicare too if a mother chooses too?

Sounds great to me!

**AmyM**

May 24th, 2007, 11:27 AM

Clearbrite that was a very moving post, I sat here with my mouth open imagining the nurses treating you and this other poor women that way how appalling.

I am a big breasted women too and I found that to make it even harder for me as my breast was bigger than my babies head, and yes having the roled towel helped so so much.

Alpha I think you touched on something very important about the main rasons as to why some women choose not to breast feed, I wanted to feed but it felt 'wrong' to me and I didnt like doing it at all, and what you said about women not accepting thier bodies in that way is very true, I think at the time I was feeling that breasts were infact sexual and I was confused about what I was doing and was it the 'right' thing for me to be doing, I have matured alot over the past 6 years and feel more at peace with my body and its real

functions and I now trust in my body too, and I also agree that I think this is because people dont see breast feeding as important as it actually is, I think its very important that we start to make the public aware that breast feeding is very natural more so than formular feeding, so that we as women can feel comfortable, and not judged, I have heard so many women here on BB over the time I have been here saying how someone said this or they were asked to keave a restraurant etc I think that is utterly appalling and that just makes it more about breasts being sexual when it has nothing to do with sex at all, and that is a lack of understnding and education of the people around us.

**IK**

May 24th, 2007, 11:40 AM

Clearbrite, the ABA is a not for profit organisation that runs off its subscriptions and donations and every once in a while, a government grant. It needs to be a government initiative to fund free memberships for the first year. Until then, it is the perfect baby shower gift. If the ABA were to become a government body it would be compromised and lose its independence. All that wonderful research would have a government agenda.

**Linda M**

May 24th, 2007, 11:51 AM

I Breastfed for 10 months and my milk supply got so low that I couldn't keep going. I saw a few different lactation consultants and whilst they were all very lovely and full of advise they were sooooo pro breastfeeding that they didn't think about how I felt. Until I meet Diane, she too was a pro breastfeeding advocate (and lactation consultant) but one of the first things she said to me was: don't worry darling if we can't get you feeling like your getting somewhere today we swap to the bottle and you're bub will be fine and you'll be happy and much less stressed. This happend when my Daughter was about 10 days old. If it wasn't for her considering my feelings, I think I would have been too stressed to continue trying. But luckily for my beautiful Daughter this made all the difference. I was able to relax a little more and things started to get better. Sometimes the "Probreast" (don't get me wrong, I'm "probreast") consultants would have a lot more success keeping people trying if they relaxed the message a little.  
Regards,  
Mum of Charlotte and one on the way (I hope to breastfed again. Maybe even longer this time)

**no3onboard**

May 24th, 2007, 12:00 PM

Kelly,

I guess more info antenatally - given out - I guess this is where the govt can come in, producing some quality info/pamphlet detailing the benefits for mothers and babies both short benefits and long-term ones.

I agree pamphlets hae severe limitations, but also wonder if the govt will balk at TV campaigns - as they basically need to run ad infinitum to 'catch' the target audience.

The idea of educating kids as part of sex ed programs at school is a good one. I presently would love to take my baby to my son's (Grade 2) class for 'show and tell' and actually breastfeed her there, but I seriously doubt I'd be allowed, and if I was I KNOW the school and I would get complaints from other parents.

But I am skeptical about all of this education, because unless the health professionals themselves are highly motivated in their own right to increase the bf-ing rates of their clientele, the info will never be backed up with that all-important support and solution-driven advice from OBs, midwives, paedes, GPs, MCHNs & LCs.

Jo - mother of three (currently in my 58th month of breastfeeding)

**alisando01**

May 24th, 2007, 12:10 PM

I replied to the 1st email so kelly will c this twice.

I think the biggest problem is public attitude. I got comments about indecent exposure to which I replied that breastfeeding is legal. I think there needs to be advertising advising especially older males about the fact that breastfeeding is exempt from the indecent exposure laws. I found the support from medical professionals was heaps and it was only after I got out of hospital that I got abused for feeding my baby.

**Flea**

May 24th, 2007, 12:22 PM

Just some random thoughts on the education aspect you mentioned Kelly.

\*There needs to be a uniform, centralised means of advising pregnant women of the resources available to them if they run into problems breastfeeding. This should be as far as it goes with pregnant women

because for the most part everyone thinks they won't have problems and everything will be fine for them - so it all goes in one ear and out the other anyway (a bit like the c/section information at antenatal classes). Women should not be scratching around the phonebook with a screaming baby that hasn't slept for two days trying to find where "Lactation Consultant" is listed in the yellow pages as I had to :rolleyes:

\*The ABA needs to get more realistic with it's education. It needs to acknowledge to women that while breastfeeding is a natural function, it's almost never easy at first. They need to acknowledge that sometimes it hurts like hell. That sometimes you will go days without sleep because the baby won't take a bottle of ebm so no one else can feed him. They need to acknowledge that while in a perfect world mum's could feed without discrimination in public, every breastfeeding mother can tell you a horror story of at least one thing that's happened to her when she DARED to get her boob out at the local shopping centre. I could go on here but you know what I mean. Let's talk about the realities and how to cope with them, rather than fluffing on about how "wonderful" breastfeeding is. Yes it is wonderful, but for many mums it is not at first and no wonder they feel ripped off, or like there must be something wrong when all they hear is this fluffy b/s from the only support organisation that they can access for free.

I think the ABA does good work for the most part but in all my dealings with them I felt they really minimised my issues by talking to me in terms like I've described above.

\*When we talk about breast milk being the best thing for baby, we imply the artificial milk is the norm and breastmilk is "a step up from that". This makes artificial milk a more palatable substitute. When we really look at it, breastmilk is the norm, which makes anything less than that a poorer substitute. I think there really needs to be more of a focus on the "human milk for human babies" aspect, that shows that breastmilk is the NORMAL thing to be feeding babies, not that it's some holy grail that only some women can produce in satisfactory quality and quantity. The language needs to change, they're coming at this the wrong way I think.

**MelanieR**

May 24th, 2007, 12:29 PM

I was thinking about this last night, about how lack of education is such a key factor, and what sort of things it would help to educate people about. Certainly I believe all health professionals need further education in the benefits and difficulties of breastfeeding, but in terms of educating the general public, and in particular girls/women of childbearing age/expectant mums, the following are the things that in my experience and those of my friends that would really help:

- How great the benefits are, that it's not just immunity that bf bubs get, but also things like better eyesight, jaw development, lower rates of leukemia etc
- How the benefits can really affect you in day to day life - eg in 12 months times when your child is around other children at day care, playgroup etc, how wonderful it is that they rarely get the bugs that so many of the other kids get regularly - my son is over 2, has been attending day care since 7 months and has never had an ear infection or gastro, despite being exposed lots of times
- That initial attachment can be, and often is, difficult for a variety of reasons - large breasts, tired bub, flat nipples, tongue-tie etc etc etc. How this does get much easier over time as the bub gets bigger and more experienced, and some ways of dealing with it - different holds, bfing pillows, nipple shields etc etc, also that resources like lc and ABA are out there and can make a huge difference.
- That most of us worry about not having enough milk, even when we actually have too much. That we should trust our bodies more, that frequent sucking causes more milk production and that inability to produce enough milk is actually very uncommon. That the growth charts in the health books are based on ff bubs. And that supplementing with formula can hinder instead of help, as it affects the supply/demand cycle. Again that the ABA and lc are available for help

There are many other things, but I think those are the things that would be most helpful to most people. Also the ABA 24 hour help line should be more widely publicised. In the QLD health book it simply says "ABA" not what it is for etc.

**Berry**

May 24th, 2007, 12:33 PM

Kelly - I'm more than happy for you to use anything I said here; good on you for presenting to Parliament, sounds fantastic, can you let us know how it goes?

A key thing to me personally that I would want to reiterate is that its important for nurses and others involved in the week after birth to layer on the positive reinforcement, helping mums feel proud of their breastfeeding accomplishments. I felt even a tiny amount of criticism of breastfeeding success in the first week could be detrimental as you are so exhausted and emotionally vulnerable that it makes you feel like a failure to be told you're not doing it right.

**rayray**

May 24th, 2007, 12:48 PM

Kelly feel free to use anything I have posted if its helpful.

On the ABA memberships, when I had DS in 2005, one of the coucils near me - I think it was Hobsens Bay