

Breastfeeding Myths

Many Women do not produce enough milk.

Not True! But the baby may not be getting the milk mom has available. For more information, call Carol at (309) 344-2224.

It is normal for breastfeeding to hurt.

Not True! If it hurts, baby is not latched well. Baby will not get enough milk if the latch is not good, so do not tolerate pain. For more information, call Carol at (309) 344-2224.

There is not enough milk in the first 3-4 days to satisfy baby.

Wrong! The first milk produced is colostrum. It is similar to a power bar for athletes. It is measured in drops or teaspoons, not ounces. Your body knows how big your baby is before you do, and it knows how much to produce. Colostrum is perfect for the baby's "unfinished" digestive system. A baby who is latched to the breast correctly will get all the milk he needs.

A baby will need to be at breast for 5, 10, 20 minutes on each side to make sure they get enough to eat, and not cause nipple pain.

False. Limiting time at breast will not fix a bad latch, which is what causes pain. Feeding for hours at a time will not fix a bad latch which is what limits milk available to baby. A baby who is latched well and transferring milk will not be at the breast for hours at a time.

A mother should wash her nipples before feeding.

Wrong answer. Soap is drying to skin. Lotion should not be applied because it may not appeal to baby. Those little bumps on the areola of your breast are oil glands that secrete protective oil for your nipples, and breast milk has antibodies that kill germs. The glands also smell like your amniotic fluid, help baby recognize you as mommy, and find your nipple. Plain water is sufficient for cleansing. Do not use this same approach when cleaning supplies for bottle feeding. Hot soapy water is essential because formula is an excellent breeding ground for germs.

Pumping is a good way to tell how much milk a mother has.

NOT TRUE! A baby who nurses well can get much more milk than his mother can pump. Pumping amounts are determined by many factors, including mothers stress level. Pumping will only tell you how much you can pump.

It is easier to bottle feed than to breastfeed.

Not true! Or it should not be true, but in the first few weeks if a woman doesn't get the help she needs, it could be. A poor start can make things difficult, but it doesn't have to continue to be difficult. For more information, call Carol at (309) 344-2224.

Breastfeeding ties a mother down.

False. A breastfeeding mother has more time with her baby because she is not tied down to cleaning bottles and mixing formula. She does not have to worry about warming up a bottle, or if she has clean water for mixing, or if there has been a recall. All she needs is a few diapers and she can be out the door!

There is no way to tell if baby is getting enough milk.

Wrong! We may not be able to measure how much a baby eats, but a baby who is transferring milk has a characteristic suck pattern. Regular weight checks will assure you baby is eating well. Dirty and wet diapers are another way to tell.

Formula is as good as breast milk.

Wrong, wrong, wrong. Every correction of a deficiency in formula is advertised as an advance. Babies will gain weight quickly when eating formula, but formula fed babies will lack the other benefits of breast milk, both as infants and adults.

If a mother is sick, on medication, having x rays or surgery she should not breastfeed.

Wrong again. By the time a mother feels ill, she has already exposed the baby. Within hours she will provide the baby with antibodies to fight the infection. There are only a few medications that a mother cannot take safely while breastfeeding. I will be happy to provide your doctor with information about the medication you are taking, just call me. Even surgery is usually not a reason to stop breastfeeding.

If a baby is sick with diarrhea or vomiting he should stop breastfeeding

No way. The best medicine for vomiting and diarrhea for a baby is breastfeeding, except under very rare circumstances. The “oral hydrating solutions” are for formula fed babies whose sick tummies and intestines cannot tolerate the huge proteins in formula.

A breastfeeding mothers diet has to be perfect.

Not true. A woman should have a decent diet because that is what is good for her. Unless her diet is critically low in nutrients for a long time, her milk will still be the best choice for her baby. A women will use about 500 calories a day making milk, but she does not have to eat extra calories to make up for that. Breastfeeding women also do not have to avoid spices, chocolate, beans or broccoli.

A breastfeeding woman has to drink lots of fluids.

False. A mom needs to drink water when she is thirsty. Increasing her fluid intake will not increase her milk supply.

A breastfeeding woman cannot smoke.

Smoking is not good for anybody and there are no benefits to it, but there are more benefits to baby when a smoking mother breastfeeds than when she formula feeds. Just smoke outside the house and never in the car.

A breastfeeding woman can never drink alcohol.

This is also not true. Reasonable alcohol intake does not need to be discouraged (one or two drinks). Excessive alcohol use is not a good thing for anyone.

A woman with flat or inverted nipples cannot breastfeed.

It is breast feeding not nipple feeding. It is true that it may be more difficult to get started in the first few days, but that does not mean that it will be impossible. Babies adjust. If you have concerns, call Carol at (309) 344-2224.

Women with small breasts cannot breastfeed.

False – size does not affect breastfeeding.

Women with large breasts will suffocate the baby.

Tuck the baby's bottom closer to you and his head will pull away from the breast a little. You may also try rolling a small towel and putting it under your breast for support.

Babies need to know how to take a bottle.

After breastfeeding is going well, a bottle can be given if mom chooses to, but it is not a law that any baby has to be given a bottle. Babies can get nourishment by cup, spoon, or dropper as well. Call me if you need help.

A mother's milk can sour in the breast.

False.

Some babies just don't like to breastfeed.

It is true that some babies can have a nipple preference for the nipple that gives them what they want the fastest. That is another reason to call me before you give that bottle of formula. Bottle feeding while you are trying to get breastfeeding going well can cause problems. If you are concerned about the baby starving, feed expressed breast milk with a spoon, dropper or cup. For more information, call Carol at (309) 344-2224.

A mother whose breasts do not feel full does not have enough milk.

A woman's body will adjust to her baby's milk intake. Her breasts may feel full at times, but if they do not, it does not mean she has no milk.

Breastfeeding in public is not decent.

Absolutely not true. The woman who breastfeeds her baby in public is being a very good example. She is also protected by state law both in public and at work for pumping her milk. Women are the only people who can breastfeed. It is a miracle of our bodies to be able to provide nourishment, not something to be ashamed of.

Physicians and Pediatricians know a lot about breastfeeding.

Not necessarily. There is no course taught to medical students about how to fix breastfeeding problems. What doctors know is learned by self-study usually. Even if they are well informed,

they probably do not have the time available to help you with a baby who won't latch well. For more information, call Carol at (309) 344-2224.

Free formula samples do not influence breastfeeding.

Not true. If your baby has a hard time learning breastfeeding, you will be tempted to give him a bottle of formula. If you give him a bottle of formula, he will gulp it down like he hasn't ever been fed because the flow from the artificial nipple is so fast. He will then sleep for a longer time than he ever has before because formula fed babies sleep deeper and longer (that could be a reason why formula fed babies have a higher incidence of SIDS). Mom feels like she has been starving her baby and the next time he struggles at breast, she will be more likely to follow with a bottle of formula again. (formula is as good as her milk anyway, isn't that what the label says? Don't believe it!) By now she feels like she has failed at breastfeeding because the baby is really fussing at her breast, (baby wants immediate flow) and the formula companies have got you. Your brain thinks you are weaning the baby because the communication from the breast to the brain is not happening, and within several days mom really will not have enough milk. You have then become a slave to the formula merchants.

Babies should not nurse for comfort.

It is not good to eat for comfort, but nursing is not just eating, it is comfort, warmth, baby can hear your heartbeat, and feels mommy very close. Is it better for baby to associate bottle or pacifier with comfort?

Daddy has to feed in order to bond.

Please do not limit the importance of being male by lack of feeding ability. Daddies make a significant impact on babies just because they are male. Mommies need the support and help of daddy, baby needs the strength of daddy. Daddy's deeper voice is calming, his wide, flat chest is a good place to nap, especially skin to skin, and his strong hands and arms can be very comforting for the football hold to calm a fussy baby.

Breastfeeding is too stressful.

In the first few weeks of parenting, everything is stressful. If breastfeeding is not going well, call me. We can eliminate that source of stress. After you deliver, the hormones that have kept the baby from being born are no longer needed. The return to pre-pregnant levels can cause a roller coaster emotional ride. This can occur as early as day 3-4 after birth, and lasts variable amounts of time. The effect is different from pregnancy to pregnancy. It is important to understand that your emotions are not a result of being a bad person or a bad mother, but simply because of hormone fluctuations. The hormones involved in breastfeeding are actually calming. Prolactin is responsible for milk production, but is also called the "nurturing" or "mothering" hormone. It encourages motherly feelings, and bonding. It also has an effect like Valium. Studies have shown breastfeeding mothers are better rested than formula feeding moms because of the hormone release of prolactin, even if the sleep they get is less in terms of hours.