

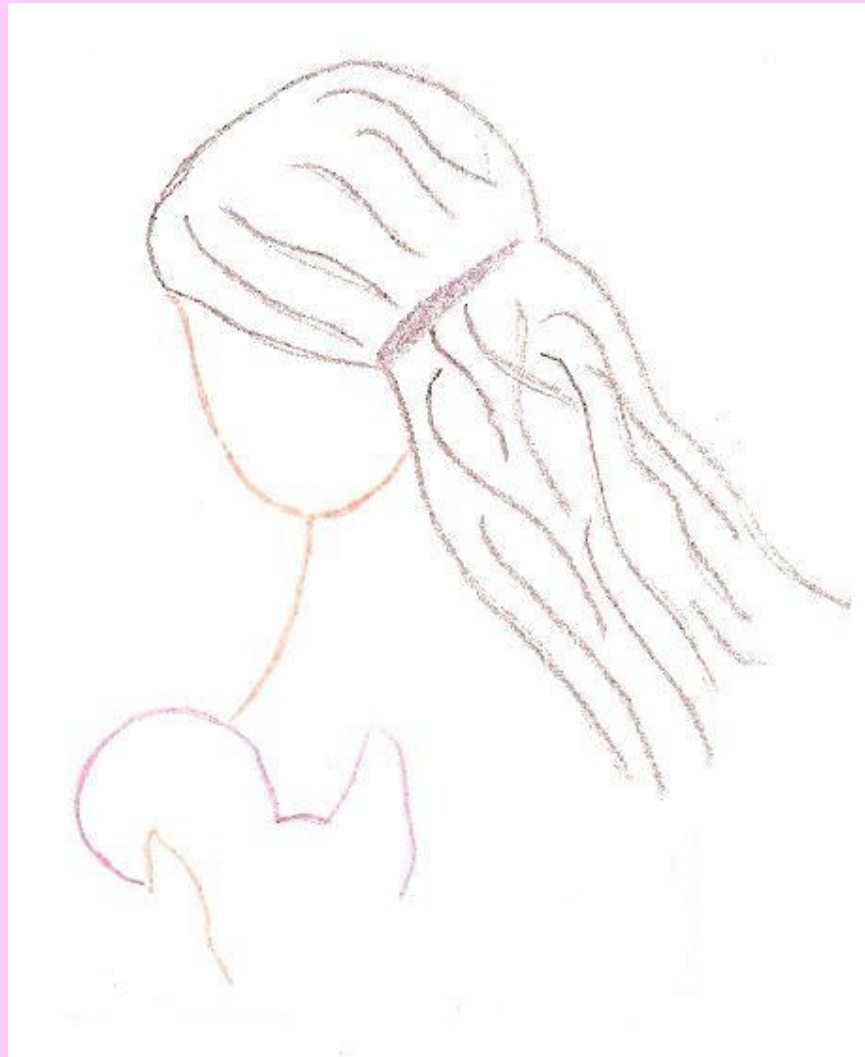
The essential guide on breastfeeding

The Real Mothers Guide to Breastfeeding

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The Real Mum's Guide to Breastfeeding



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My Story

When I was pregnant the first time around and deciding how I was going to feed my baby, I couldn't find the information I needed on the subject. Don't get me wrong – there was plenty of “breast is best” advice, in fact I felt I had little choice in the matter, and if I chose not to breastfeed I would be a terrible mum and a very selfish person. To make matters more confusing, my friends had mainly chosen to bottle-feed having found breastfeeding too painful or too hard.

I decided to give it a go anyway and to tackle each hurdle as it came along.

The first one was when I was in hospital and wasn't quite sure what I was doing, and whether I was doing it “right”. Surrounded by busy midwives, visiting families, my crying baby, and feeling very tired and sore myself, I wasn't sure whether breast feeding was really for me. Fortunately I was saved by a passing midwife who very quickly showed me the latching on technique before rushing off.

A few days later, back at home, my nipples were so sore I had to bite into the duvet to stop myself from crying out in pain when my baby suckled. To add to this my breasts were rock hard, ginormous and very very tender. I was definitely ready to give up this time. I was very lucky in that I had a brilliant midwife who promised me if I could survive one more night of the pain, it would get better. I thought it unlikely, but I trusted her because she had been a rock all through my pregnancy, and had breastfed herself. Purely because I liked her so much I decided one more night wouldn't (quite) kill me. I used some of the Lansinoh cream she had left me, which instantly relieved the soreness - and the all the other pains started to ease off, enough for me to give it another go.

After all this trauma my baby and I really started to enjoy breastfeeding. We overcame the hurdles that had bothered me at first – breastfeeding in public, ‘am I doing it right?’, ‘is she getting enough?’, ‘am I feeding frequently enough?’, etc?

Then one night when my partner was out, my baby seemed completely dissatisfied with her feed. She kept moving her head away, and crying. I became very emotional about this, thinking that I had run out of milk by doing something wrong or just being an ‘inadequate mother’. I panicked and made her a bottle and she gulped it all down, and then slept. I felt I had let her down, and that my milk had run out. (I never considered she may have been ill or teething – and that I hadn't run out of milk at all!)

My partner convinced me to carry on, and I compromised by giving her a night time feed of formula. And so a new routine was set, and seemed to work well.

When my baby was four months old I caught flu, badly, and couldn't move, or eat, or feed my baby, for two days. When I felt a bit better I tried to feed her, but was convinced I had totally dried out of milk. My breasts felt "empty". I spoke to my Health Visitor who agreed with me that the milk had probably stopped, due to my not eating and not having fed her for 2 days. (She didn't advise me that it was very likely I could start producing milk again.....)

I had fed my baby for four months, and was quite happy to move on to formula. After all, it was much easier to feed in public, my partner could help with the feeds, and friends with babies at the same time all bottle-fed their babies, so I felt a bit more "in with the crowd". And anyway I was totally unaware I probably could feed her myself again. I thought once you had run out of milk, that was that!

I'm on baby number 2 now, he's 9 months old, and I'm exclusively breastfeeding. Even though I had breastfed before, during my second pregnancy I did a lot more research and found out a lot of things I didn't know first time around. I had to wade through a lot of useless information, a lot of hippy rubbish (sorry!), a lot of very complicated medical jargon and what I ended up with I share with you here.

Finding out this new information made me more aware of what was happening when I was breastfeeding and made me more confident and, I truly believe, able to breastfeed for longer.

I haven't had to wash, scrub and sterilise bottles, make sure I've had enough formula in the house, make up formula sit around waiting for bottles to reach the right temperature, spend 20 minutes holding the bottle while my baby feeds, going downstairs and making up bottles in the middle of the night, etc.

I have, however, had to deal with mastitis this time around, and been in such pain I could hardly move. I've had it twice in fact. I've also been practically housebound because my baby wouldn't take a bottle so I couldn't leave him with anyone. In fact my baby was six months old before I left him at all!

I've been called both a "fantastic mum" for this, and a "fool". I've felt guilty about stopping breastfeeding, and I've felt guilty about not being able to leave my baby because I chose to breastfeed! I've learned you can't please everyone, so what is important is that I please myself and my baby!

So that's what this book aims to offer. An informative guide as to what breastfeeding is really like, the pros and cons of breastfeeding and bottle-feeding, and no preaching on why you MUST breastfeed, whether you want to or not! Just the information you need to make your own choice.

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