

# The male contribution to breastfeeding

**Breastfeeding is provided for by nature, and is perfectly matched to mother and baby nutrition. Fathers can influence the success of breastfeeding, duration of breastfeeding, the health and satisfaction of mother and child.**

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## This is how you can support breastfeeding:

- › Inform yourself together with your partner about breastfeeding and life with a baby. Breastfeeding is a learning process that often seems a bit tedious in the first few days. That soon changes.
- › Breastfeeding problems can usually be overcome with expert advice\*. If possible, find useful contacts together in advance, during the pregnancy.
- › Take your time after the birth – a holiday would be perfect.
- › For a relaxed return from the clinic, it is important for your wife that she finds a clean, tidy apartment without mountains of dirty laundry as well as a well-stocked refrigerator.
- › Especially in the first days, support your partner by getting rid of uninvited visitors and well-intentioned advice. Take care of organizational matters such as the telephone service, shopping, making appointments, administrative procedures, organizing help for the household, the care of older siblings etc.
- › Babies love to be carried around and held by their parents, if possible directly on the bare skin. This close contact supports the weight gain, temperature regulation and well-being of your child. It strengthens the immune system, relieves pain or distress. Carrying promotes bonding



**Body contact increases the bond with your baby.**

\* Lactation Consultants IBCLCs are specialists in breastfeeding and lactation.

- › between you and your child. This is how you can easily relieve your partner in the care of the baby.
- › Taking care of a baby is a 24-hour job, 7 days a week with a high emotional burden, especially for the mother. Give your partner an open ear and heart when she tells you about grueling hours or days. It is certainly good for her to hear what you appreciate about her and her role as mother. Pamper the baby and each other.
- › Seek contact with other fathers and father support groups.



**Fathers can support breastfeeding.**

## Breastfeeding and sexuality:

- › Breastfeeding delays the return of fertility, however, it does not protect reliably against a new pregnancy. There are contraceptives that can be used during lactation.
- › It takes different lengths of time until women can relax and enjoy sex again. The experience of birth, sleep deficiency and the constant stress of a demanding baby play a more significant role than breastfeeding itself.
- › The breast of a woman constantly changes throughout her life. Genes, pregnancy and the use of nicotine have a great influence on the appearance of the breast. Breastfeeding changes the shape and appearance of the breast only for a short time, but not permanently.



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## Facts about breastfeeding:

- › Mother's milk is a food with no equal that constantly adapts to perfectly meet the needs of the baby.
- › Living cells, immunoglobulins, and many other important substances that are found only in breast milk support the immune system of the child. Breastfed babies are less often sick.
- › Suckling at the breast promotes the formation of the jaw and mouth muscles. This promotes language development and proper teeth alignment.
- › Breastfeeding hormones promote patience and perseverance in the mother and protect against depression; the absence of menstruation protects the mother's iron reserves.
- › Breastfeeding promotes weight loss and reduces the risk of breast, ovarian and cervical cancer, and much more.
- › Breastfeeding and breastmilk feeding provide the least expensive and most effective health care for babies and their mothers.
- › Breastfeeding is not always easy. The decision to wean is too hard to reverse. Sometimes „creative breastfeeding“ is a solution: bottle-feeding breastmilk or complements of formula, letting baby suckle at the breast for comforting only or simply breastfeeding for a short temporary time, etc. If in fact the baby is not or is no longer breastfed, the baby still needs closeness and security with mom and dad.