



Truth Behind Breastfeeding Myths – Guidelines for Child Care Providers

Like many things in this world, there are truths and myths about breastfeeding. Many of the myths about breastfeeding keep women from breastfeeding their infants. Breastfeeding is the recommended method of infant feeding. Listed below are the truths about some common breastfeeding myths. This information can help you help parents know the facts.

I know that I can't breastfeed!

According to many researchers, only 1-3% of women truly cannot breastfeed. Some reasons why a mother cannot breastfeed include a temporary illness or breast surgery which has damaged the milk ducts. Some mothers feel they cannot breastfeed because they did not breastfeed their other children. Often times increasing a mother's knowledge on breastfeeding and giving her the proper support and encouragement will help her try breastfeeding her infant.

I am not producing enough milk!

Many mothers choose to quit breastfeeding because they feel they are not producing enough milk. For the first 2-3 days, mothers produce a small amount of *colostrum*, which is rich in protein, vitamins and immune-helping agents. Because it is produced in small amounts, many mothers think this is not enough for their infants, but it is! It is all that an infant needs for the first few days of life. Also, parents of breastfeeding infants often are concerned with the weight loss that occurs with newborn breastfed infants. If a parent is concerned about the amount of weight loss their infant is having, it would be important for you to tell them to talk to their health professional and/or a lactation consultant.

My breasts will look funny and sag if I breastfeed!

This is not true at all! Genetics control whether or not a woman's breasts will sag and this often can occur with pregnancy, but not breastfeeding.

If I go back to work, I can't breastfeed!

Working and breastfeeding can take a little extra planning! Many companies are supportive of breastfeeding especially if they know the benefits that breastfeeding can provide. These benefits include a healthier infant which will lead to his/her mother and father having to take less time off of work! It is good

to purchase or rent a breast pump from local hospitals and health departments, including WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) so the mother can pump her breastmilk. Also, it is important for the working breastfeeding mother to have support from you, her child care provider.

I don't have a good supply of milk because I am stressed and tired!

The most common causes of low milk supply are poor latch-on of the infant to the breast, poor positioning of the infant to the breast and not feeding the infant enough throughout the day. If a mother is feeling stressed or tired, it is important for her to find help among a supportive family member, friend, health professional or child care provider to help her decrease the amount of stress in her life if possible.

I don't drink milk, so how can I make milk?

There is no mammal in this world that drinks milk to make milk for their infants. A mother does not have to drink milk to make milk.

If I breastfeed my baby, he/she will be spoiled later on in life!

Holding an infant while he/she is feeding is very important to reduce the infant's chance of choking and ear infections. It is noted in research that infants who are held and cry less throughout the day appear to feel more safe and secure in their relationships with others as they get older.

If I breastfeed my baby, my mother or my baby's father will not be able to bond with the infant!

Feeding is not the only way that other family members and friends can bond with the baby. Burping, diapering, bathing, rocking, holding, cuddling and playing with the infant are all things that are important for an infant's growth, development and bonding with others. If a family member really wants to feed the baby breastmilk, it can be given in a bottle.

If I breastfeed my infant with on-demand feedings, my baby's father and I will never have any alone time together!

Becoming a parent can change your lives forever – but this can be a positive thing! Whether a mother breastfeeds or formula feeds her baby, a newborn requires much attention for the first few weeks of life. It is important to know that a newborn infant's needs will decrease over time. This is also a great time to work on developing your parenting skills together as a team.