

Stick with Breastfeeding — It's Worth It!

You probably already know that breastfeeding has many benefits for your baby. But did you know it can lower *your* risk of certain cancers (breast and ovarian), type 2 diabetes, and heart disease?

Even though it's natural, breastfeeding isn't always easy — and many moms stop breastfeeding sooner than they planned. The good news is that there's a lot you can do to make it more likely that you'll reach your breastfeeding goals.



Get ready to breastfeed before you give birth.

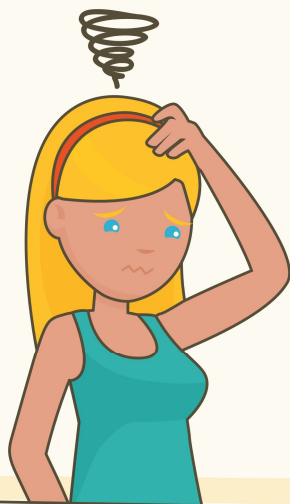
Taking a lactation class during your pregnancy can help you feel more confident and makes it more likely you'll meet your breastfeeding goals. Here are a few ways to find a lactation class:

- Ask your doctor where to find lactation classes in your community. Check with your delivery hospital to find out what classes they offer.
- Ask your employer if lactation classes are available as an employee benefit.



Get your support system on board.

- **Tell your partner or others who will be helping out that you plan to breastfeed.** That way, they can serve as a source of encouragement and support.
- **Plan to start breastfeeding right after giving birth.** Tell your doctor or midwife that you want to start breastfeeding in the first hour after your baby is born.



Know the first few weeks can be tough!

It's possible you may:

- Have a hard time transitioning home from the hospital
- Worry about producing enough milk
- Worry about how to breastfeed correctly
- Find breastfeeding painful (this is an indication that you should seek support from a lactation consultant)
- Be overwhelmed due to lack of sleep
- Be uncomfortable breastfeeding in public

Keep in mind that the first weeks of breastfeeding may be the hardest — but most of the time, it gets easier with practice.

Reach out and get help.

Research shows that moms who get help are more likely to keep breastfeeding. Here are a few ways to find a lactation consultant, peer counselor, or peer group:



- Ask your baby's doctor or your delivery hospital if they offer access to lactation consultants.
- Find a local lactation consultant or peer counselor through La Leche League (www.llli.org).
- Ask your employer if you have access to a lactation consultant through your employee wellness program.

Keep in mind that it's also important to check in with your baby's doctor to make sure your baby is eating enough and gaining the right amount of weight.

Keep breastfeeding when you go back to work.

Many women continue breastfeeding when they return to work — and you can be one of them! Here are some key things you can do to make the transition easier:

- Start pumping and freezing breast milk in advance so you'll have a supply built up when you go back to work.
- Talk with your supervisor about when and where you'll be able to pump at work.
- Get the supplies you'll need to pump and store your breast milk, such as pump parts, bottles, and a lunch box or cooler to store milk in.



Keep breastfeeding after 6 months.

It's important to know that your baby will still get most of her nutrition from breast milk or formula — even after she starts eating solid foods.



Set your baby up for healthy growth and development by sticking with breastfeeding. It may take some work, but it's worth it!

For more information, visit www.healthychildren.org/growinghealthy.

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