

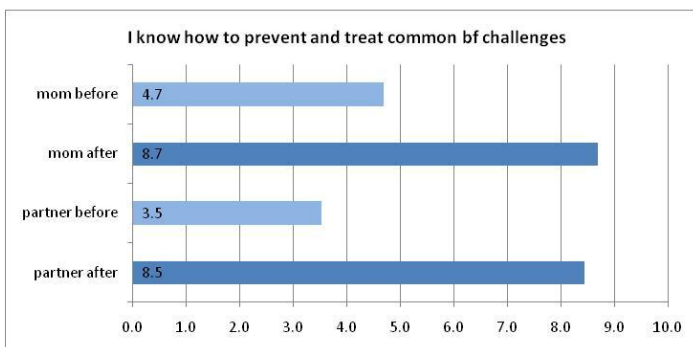
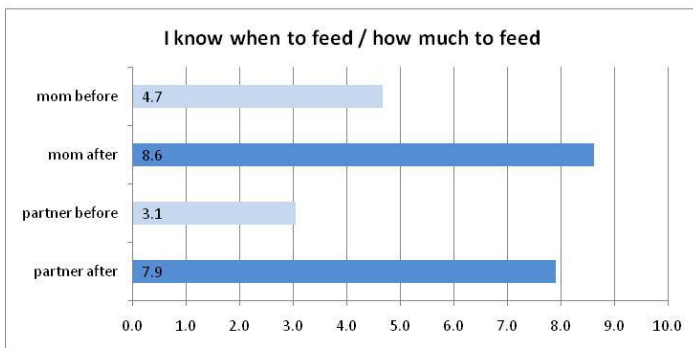
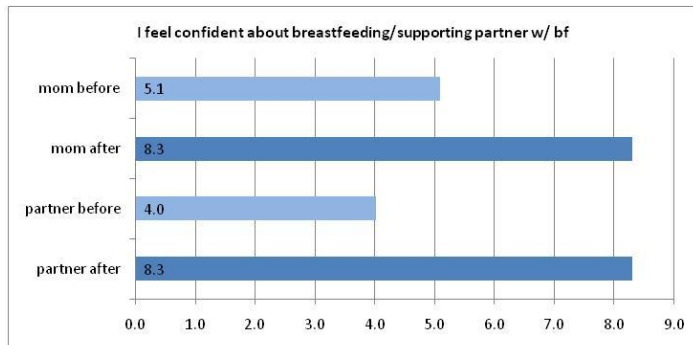
To increase your chances of a positive, successful breastfeeding experience, take advantage of the support resources that are available.

Prenatal Classes

Take a breastfeeding class before your baby is born. (They are offered at many hospitals, and by independent childbirth educators.)

A breastfeeding class can help you learn more about how the body makes milk, how to increase your milk supply, how to help baby latch on in a way that is comfortable for you, and lets baby get plenty of milk. The class will also cover the benefits of breastfeeding, and how to prevent and treat challenges that may arise.

Encourage your partner to attend classes with you. The more he or she knows, the better he/she can support you! Here are outcome results from breastfeeding classes which show how much students learn in a class.



Other research also shows benefits of classes. Moms who took prenatal classes:

- Were more likely to succeed: First-time moms who took breastfeeding classes reported a higher frequency of breastfeeding success (by their own definition) than those who did not take classes (Wiles, 1984)
- Breastfed longer: In a low income population with low breastfeeding rates, moms who took a breastfeeding class breastfed for 76 days on average, versus 29.5 days for those who did not take classes. (Reifsnider, 1997)

Phone Hotlines for Support with Breastfeeding

Your hospital may have a dedicated hotline you can call with breastfeeding questions, or they may recommend that you simply call the labor and delivery nurses' station for advice. Ask your care provider what local support is available. National Women's Health Center offers a toll-free hotline staffed by La Leche League counselors. 1-800-994-9662. It is available Monday – Friday, 9 – 6 Eastern time.

Lactation Consultants for Help with Breastfeeding Challenges

After your baby is born, you may find that everything goes smoothly with breastfeeding, or you could be faced with a variety of challenges.

If breastfeeding is challenging for you, there is help available! It's best to call when you first start having a hard time, rather than waiting until things have gone downhill and everyone is frustrated!

If you're experiencing these things, contact a lactation consultant:

- if it hurts to breastfeed after the first minute of a feeding; or if it hurts at all after the first month of nursing
- if you're worried about your milk supply and whether baby is getting enough

Lactation consultants can also answer any question you have about:

- Early breastfeeding problems, including poor latch, sore nipples, engorgement
- Babies who are reluctant nursers or difficult to nurse
- Nutrition information for mother and baby
- Slow or poor weight gain
- Combining breastfeeding and formula supplementation
- Breast pumps and hand expression
- Plugged ducts and mastitis
- Combining breastfeeding and working outside the home
- Breastfeeding twins
- Breastfeeding adopted babies
- Breastfeeding infants with special needs
- Weaning

Research shows us that breastfeeding support services help families get breastfeeding off to a great start.

Support by lactation consultants (in hospital visits, home visits, or over the phone) had these benefits:

- Increased confidence: Of the moms who spoke with a lactation consultant, 85% felt more confident afterward.... (Kuan, 1999)
- Longer duration of breastfeeding: the moms who received support from a lactation consultant nursed for an average of 3.1 months versus 2.4 months

for those who did not meet with a lactation consultant. (Quarles, 1994)
Another study showed that of the women who had home visits, 100% were still breastfeeding at 4 weeks, versus only 68% of women who had not had home visits. (Porteous, 2000)

- More likely to meet or exceed their goal for breastfeeding duration: 71% of the supported mothers met their goals, vs. 54% of those who did not receive support. (Quarles, 1994).
- Fewer problems with breastfeeding: women who received home visits reported fewer problems with breastfeeding and greater satisfaction with the help received. (Boulvain, 2004)

Breastfeeding has huge health benefits for mom and baby, and the longer mom breastfeeds, the greater the benefits.

Cost-effectiveness: Although lactation consultants do charge a fee for visits, their clients believe that it is money very well spent.

Formula feeding a baby costs \$100 or more a month. Therefore, if a breastfeeding home visit helps you to breastfeed just five weeks longer than you would have nursed without the support, you will have broken even financially, and gained:

- short-term benefits for baby: less diarrhea and constipation, and fewer ear infections
- long-term benefits for baby: reduced risk of obesity, asthma, allergies, and diabetes
- long-term benefits for mom: reduced risk of osteoporosis, breast cancer, and ovarian cancer

La Leche League

Free support groups for breastfeeding moms. (You can also attend during pregnancy, if you would like to meet breastfeeding moms, and learn more about what to expect.) Meetings are led by trained peer counselors. Monthly group discussion topics include:

1. Advantages of Breastfeeding
2. The Breastfed Baby and the Family
3. Meeting Early Challenges
4. Nutrition and Weaning

There are several active groups around the world! For listings of group locations and meeting times, see www.llli.org

Resource for Breastfeeding Info

www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding: One of the best resources on the web for breastfeeding information, with links to all the other great resources.

For more information on pregnancy and baby care:
See our books: *Pregnancy, Childbirth & the Newborn* or *The Simple Guide to Having a Baby*.
Take a childbirth preparation class at Great Starts, or in your local community.

For parenting tips, information for families, or to talk to someone about parenting:
In Washington State: Call the Family Help Line at 1-800-932-HOPE
Outside of WA: contact your local Circle of Parents agency at www.circleofparents.org