



Oxford Health
NHS Foundation Trust



Health Visiting Service

Dads, partners and breastfeeding

Your support is important

When it comes to breastfeeding, you might wonder what you can do to support your partner and baby. The truth is you can make a huge difference.

The more you know and understand about breastfeeding and normal newborn behaviour the more you will be able to help them have a positive experience and reach their breastfeeding goals.

When your partner is breastfeeding you can help by:

Encouraging her, especially if she is very tired or finding things difficult and making sure she is comfortable and has a drink and a snack nearby.

Explaining to family and friends the importance of breastfeeding and making sure other people's opinions don't affect her confidence.

Taking a larger share of the housework so your partner has more time to concentrate on feeding your baby

Knowing where to get help – and asking for it. There is a link at the end of this leaflet.

Supporting her when feeding when out and about, in case she feels self-conscious about breastfeeding in public.

Getting up when your baby wakes at night to change their nappy, and then settling your baby after they have fed.

Getting involved in other ways

The more you look after your baby, the more you will develop a strong bond with them. Your partner may find it difficult to ask for help or admit that they are struggling - but bringing up a baby is a shared responsibility. Here are some suggestions that might be useful.

- Change your baby's nappy
- Settle your baby after a feed by winding them
- Hold and soothe your baby
- Place your baby on your bare chest for skin-to-skin contact
- Give your baby a massage
- Carry your baby in a sling or baby carrier
- Talk, read and sing to your baby
- Take your baby for a walk in a pram
- Bath your baby or take a bath together.

Useful things to know about breastfeeding

Breastfeeding should not be painful, and if it is you should get help straight away. It often takes a few small adjustments to the way the baby comes onto the breast to make feeding more comfortable.

Babies are happier if they are fed as soon as they are hungry. Newborn babies usually feed a lot (anything from eight to 12 times or more in 24 hours), especially during the evenings. You can't overfeed a breastfed baby – if in doubt try offering the breast, even if the baby only recently fed. This frequent feeding helps to build up the mother's milk supply.

Look out for the feeding cues on the next page.

Developed by Women's and Newborn Services
Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

Early Cues - "I'm hungry"



Stirring



Mouth opening



Turning head
Seeking/rooting

Mid Cues - "I'm really hungry"



Stretching



Increasing physical
movement



Hand to mouth

Late Cues - "Calm me, then feed me"



Crying



Agitated body
movements



Colour turning red

Time to calm crying baby

- Cuddling
- Skin-to-skin on chest
- Talking
- Stroking

When to weigh your baby

Your baby will be weighed during their first 2 weeks by your midwife to make sure they're regaining their birthweight. Most babies are at, or above, their birthweight by 2 weeks. After that time, for a well-baby, they only need to be weighed at the time of routine checks and injections (that is **at around 2, 3, 4 and 13 months of age**). Your baby will usually only be weighed more often than these recommendations if there are concerns about their health or growth.

Some parents ask to have their babies weighed more often than this for reassurance that their baby is healthy. However, weight is a late indicator of your baby's progress and it is more important to observe their feeding, general behaviour, stool and urine output, and whether they are growing into bigger clothes. ***Regular weighing is not always helpful and can cause unnecessary worry*** especially if over a short period of time.

Further information

If your partner is finding breastfeeding difficult, either of you can ask your health visitor for help. Text Chat Health Parent line on 07312 263081. The health visiting service is available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

More information about breastfeeding support and the health visiting service can be found here:

[Feeding your baby - Health Visiting Service](#)

Partners and breastfeeding

This leaflet uses the words 'women', 'mother' and 'breastfeeding', but we know that not all pregnant people identify as women or mothers, and some prefer terms such as 'birthing people' and 'chestfeeding'. All staff will be respectful of your preferences so please advise them of your chosen pronouns and language choices.

Thank you to the following organisations for valuable information from their websites and leaflets: Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland ; Children Northeast Fathers Plus Resources www.fathers-plus.co.uk ; The National Childbirth Trust (NCT) [How can dads and partners support breastfeeding? | NCT](#); The Women's and Newborn's Service Royal Brisbane Women's Hospital

Accessibility

Patient information leaflets are also available on the Oxford Health website www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/about-us/publications/

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The ReachDeck toolbar can be accessed via the headphones icon in the bottom right corner of the screen. You can translate material into different

languages, read aloud and access other assistive features.

Oxford Health has partnered with AccessAble to produce Access Guides for our services, departments and wards. Each guide provides details and photographs to support access. You can find them at www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/access/guides/



Comments, suggestions and complaints

We are committed to providing a high standard of professional support and advice. You can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) which provides advice and support to patients, families and carers and can help to resolve any problems, concerns or complaints that you may have. Call them on **0800 328 7971**, or email **PALS@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk**

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Email enquiries@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

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