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\*Photo Source: United States Breastfeeding Committee

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# FAMILY AND FRIENDS ARE IMPORTANT

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL BREASTFEEDING



Congratulations to you—whether you are a dad, partner, grandparent, relative, or friend of a new breastfed baby.

Breastmilk is custom made for each baby and provides benefits that last a lifetime.

Did you know that the way you interact with the special nursing parent and baby in your life will affect their breastfeeding experience? Your role is important in helping both of them succeed with breastfeeding!

No experience with breastfeeding is needed! Nursing parent and baby will focus on learning to breastfeed. Your role is to encourage and help. You can love baby by doing things other than feeding. The baby will learn to play and talk by watching you and listening to you.

### Why is breastfeeding important?

Most families today breastfeed. It is the normal way to feed a baby and the way babies are meant to be fed. Doctors agree that babies' only milk should be breastmilk.

- Breastmilk is the only baby milk that has been proven to provide health benefits for both nursing parent and baby.
- Those who breastfeed their babies recover from giving birth sooner than those who do not breastfeed.
- Breastfeeding saves families lots of money (over \$1500 per year).
- When babies are fed only breastmilk, their diapers are much less smelly.
- Breastfeeding is kinder to our world. There is less waste.



### Ways family and friends can support the nursing parent and baby

#### How to help with breastfeeding

It is very important that baby nurses from their parent when feeding. This gives both baby and parent the practice needed to learn the skills it takes to breastfeed.

Babies need more than feeding! To help out and enjoy time with the baby, perhaps you can:

- Bring baby to breastfeeding parent at feeding time.
- Care for baby between feedings so parent can rest.
- Bathe baby, dress baby, change baby's diaper.
- Talk to or sing to baby.
- Care for other children so nursing parent and baby can be alone.
- Hold and cuddle baby. Give lots of love and attention.
- Help with household chores, such as laundry and cooking.

**If you are unable to be with this special family, you might deliver a meal, groceries, or pick up laundry and bring it back clean and folded.**

#### How to help the breastfeeding parent relax

Breastfeeding is harder for someone who is not relaxed. When the nursing parent feels calm, it is easier for their body to release milk. The baby gets more milk and is more content.

Ask if you can stay while baby is nursed. That way you can try to help by:

- Rubbing the nursing parent's shoulders.
- Bringing the nursing parent a healthy beverage or filling their water cup.
- Offering a healthy snack.
- Turning on some soft music.

#### How to help when breastfeeding in public

Babies are fed all the time when away from home. In fact, Maryland law states that people have the right to breastfeed their babies anywhere they have the right to be. Many are happy nursing when out and about.

If the nursing parent asks for a more private space, help by:

- Finding a place to sit that is away from large crowds of people.
- Asking for a corner booth when in a restaurant.
- Shielding parent and baby from view of others.
- Finding the breastfeeding room, if available, or a fitting room that can be used for this purpose.

### Bonding with baby

Babies need so much more than feeding! There are many things you can do to bond with baby and be a special person to them. Here are some ideas:

- Give Support—sit with the nursing parent and talk to them while nursing.
- Listen—babies cry when they need something. Respond by picking baby up and cuddling. That teaches baby to love and trust. Holding does not spoil a baby.
- Stay Close—feeding is only one thing that a baby needs. Try cuddling, holding, talking to, walking, or playing with baby.
- Be Patient—the early weeks are a time for learning and getting to know the baby.
- Be caring and kind to parent and baby. Soon things will get easier.

