
Supporting Breastfeeding:
**Grandparents can
make a difference**



Central Coast
Local Health District



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This leaflet has been developed by CCLHD Maternity Services, Child and Family Health, Nutrition Services, Health Promotion Service and Paediatrics in partnership with the Australian Breastfeeding Association and families of the Central Coast.

To be available only as general clinical guidance.

Congratulations on becoming a grandparent!

Breastfeeding is important for the normal growth and development of babies. Encouragement and support can help make breastfeeding a positive experience for the whole family. Grandparents* are an important part of this encouragement and support.

This leaflet provides information on breastfeeding that will help you feel more confident in supporting your family member to breastfeed your grandchild.



Breastmilk for baby

- ✓ Meets all their nutritional needs in the first 6 months
- ✓ Continues to be the most important food in their diet for the first 12 months
- ✓ Increases baby's resistance to infection
- ✓ Promotes normal growth and development (for example, for the immune system, eyesight, brain, speech, jaw and mouth)
- ✓ Decreases the risk of sudden infant death syndrome, diabetes, respiratory disease, tummy bugs, middle ear infections and obesity
- ✓ Continues to be nutritious for as long as baby wants to breastfeed

Breastfeeding for mum

- ✓ Helps with bonding
- ✓ Helps mum's body return to its pre-pregnant state faster
- ✓ Reduces risk of breast cancer, diabetes, ovarian cancer, and osteoporosis

*Grandparents may also include non-biological support people who have a connection similar to a grandparent.

What can grandparents do to help?

It can be difficult to know what to do, what to say and how to help your family member establish breastfeeding. New mothers are keen to seek approval but may find it difficult to ask for help. Some new mothers feel that asking for help is showing that they are not coping.

Ways in which you can help and support your family member:

- Be positive and encouraging
- Listen to her
- Encourage her to eat a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of fluids
- Prepare healthy meals and snacks
- Encourage rest
- Offer to help with housework
- Offer baby minding if that is what she would like
- Share positive experiences of breastfeeding
- Know where to get breastfeeding information when she is unsure

Breastfeeding is a learned skill. If mum and baby are having difficulties with breastfeeding, reassure her that there is help available. Refer to the end of this booklet for support services that can help with any issues covered in the following information.



Breastfeeding facts

The best way to help with breastfeeding is to learn about it. There have been many studies showing the health benefits of breastfeeding and breastmilk for mothers and babies. Yet, there is still inaccurate information in the community.

The following will help you separate fact from fiction.

Breastmilk and formula (artificial breastmilk substitutes) are not the same

- Breastmilk has exactly the right amount of nutrients needed for babies to grow well.
- There is more than enough water in breastmilk to quench baby's thirst even in hot weather.
- Breastmilk contains living cells and other unique factors that cannot be reproduced artificially. So, it is impossible to produce a formula equal to breastmilk.

Establishing breastfeeding takes time and giving formula may:

- decrease mum's milk supply
- confuse a young baby, as the flow of milk from an artificial teat is very different to the flow of milk from the breast
- lead to inflammation in the breast and mastitis as the breastmilk isn't being removed from the breast as often
- undermine a mother's self-confidence about her ability to breastfeed.

Dummies

Can create problems with breastfeeding if given to babies less than four weeks old. Dummies use a different sucking style that may cause babies to not suck as well when breastfed. The breasts are not stimulated enough to continue a good supply of milk. This may also increase the risk of mastitis.

It's okay for breastfed babies to feed often

Young babies may feed 8-12 times in a 24-hour period because breastmilk is quickly and easily digested. Babies need to be fed when they show signs of hunger. For example, finger sucking. This helps to regulate the supply of breastmilk.

Breastfeeding is great for the environment, the family budget and for saving time!

Besides the health benefits, breastfeeding:

- ✓ is locally produced, sustainable and environmentally friendly
- ✓ requires no packaging or transport and results in no wastage
- ✓ is the perfect temperature, so doesn't need heating and is ready to drink day or night
- ✓ is free and can help spare the family budget for other essential costs
- ✓ saves time, with no mixing, warming, or cleaning of bottles required.

Don't worry if breastmilk looks 'thin and watery'

Breastmilk changes in composition during each feed, throughout the day and from month to month. Expressed breastmilk in the fridge will normally separate into layers. It is okay to keep and use it for up to 72 hours.

Your grandchild is getting enough breastmilk if they:

- ✓ are alert, bright eyed and have good skin tone
- ✓ have at least five heavily wet nappies in 24 hours
- ✓ gain some weight on a regular basis.

Bowel motions of a fully breastfed baby range in colour from yellow to brown and have a distinctive but non offensive smell. The texture may vary from watery to paste like. The introduction of other fluids or foods changes the consistency and smell.

New babies often have frequent bowel motions. This will change as baby gets older. Well babies who are only fed breastmilk rarely get constipated and may go a few days without passing a motion.

Encourage contact with a local early childhood health clinic or doctor if there are any changes that worry your family.





It's okay for mum to breastfeed wherever she feels comfortable!

It takes a lot of confidence for new mothers to breastfeed in public. Some mums may prefer to breastfeed in private. Wherever your family member chooses to feed, your support is vital.

If she wants to:

- ✓ Encourage her to feed in the company of family and friends.
- ✓ Support her breastfeeding in public places.

Understanding breastfeeding issues

Milk Supply

Sometimes mothers feel that they don't have enough milk or that their milk is not good enough. Be reassured that breastmilk is made to suit the normal growth and development of each baby. When breastfeeding to baby's hunger cues, the mother's supply will match the baby's needs.

The more a baby feeds, the more milk mum will make!

Sore nipples

It is normal for a mum's nipples to be sensitive in the first few days of breastfeeding and this will improve with time. Severe nipple pain is not normal. Pain can be caused by poor attachment of the baby to the breast or by infection. To attach well, the baby needs to take a full mouthful of breast, so that the nipple is at the back of the mouth. In this way, the baby will not damage the mother's nipples. Pain during breastfeeding can be overcome so that breastfeeding is comfortable.

Mastitis

Is caused by a build up of milk in the breast. This can lead to inflamed milk ducts, which may or may not be present with a bacterial infection. Seek medical help if a mother has a fever, feels unwell and has a red, swollen and sore breast.

Continuing to breastfeed is an important part of the treatment for mastitis.



Night feeding

Night feeds are good for both mother and baby. They help:

- ✓ establish and maintain milk supply
- ✓ reduce or prevent painful full breasts
- ✓ satisfy baby's nutritional needs
- ✓ with bonding.

The age at which babies sleep through the night varies and is not related to how the baby is fed.

Mixed Feeding

Breastfeeding is natural, but it doesn't always 'just happen'. Sometimes despite all the support and best intentions to breastfeed it may not be possible. Breastfeeding for any length of time is of great benefit. It doesn't need to be all or nothing. Mixed feeding may be an option to help keep some breastfeeding going.

Mixed feeding is when the baby is given some formula feeds as well as breastfeeds.

Feeding expressed breastmilk

Babies who are mostly breastfed might find it hard to pace themselves when fed expressed breastmilk or infant formula from a bottle (mixed feeding). This is because they're used to controlling the flow of breastmilk. Sometimes these babies can drink too much too quickly.

Paced bottle-feeding can sometimes help. This method aims to mimic the way a baby would suck at the breast, but it's done with a bottle. Paced feeding techniques can be used by anyone to help make the feed more like breastfeeding.

If your family is interested in paced bottle-feeding, they can get help from the services listed at the end of this booklet.



What about introducing solids?

Breastmilk is the only food or drink that a baby needs for around the first six months of life. It provides all the nutrition they need.

Babies differ in the age that they are ready for solid foods. Signs that your grandchild may be ready to start solids include:

- ✓ being able to sit unaided
- ✓ a reduced tongue-thrust reflex that pushes food back out
- ✓ trying to reach out and grab food.

At around six months of age a variety of solid foods can start to be introduced while breastfeeding is continued.

Behaviours that are NOT a sign a baby is ready to start solids:

- ✓ *Waking up at night*
- ✓ *Feeding more often*
- ✓ *Sucking on their hand.*



Further information and support

All services are there to support parents to achieve their own feeding goals.

CCLHD Child and Family Health

 4328 7900

Breastfeeding support sessions for Central Coast residents are run by child and family health nurses to support, protect and promote breastfeeding.




Click [here](#) for community health centre locations and times or scan the QR code.

Australian Breastfeeding Association



Breastfeeding Helpline

 1800 686 268
(available 24 hours, 7 days a week)



Central Coast NSW Group

For meeting dates and times click [here](#) or scan the QR code.

CCLHD Breastfeeding Webpage

Provides basic information on breastfeeding and other sources of information and support for breastfeeding.



Click [here](#) for the webpage or scan the QR code.

The Blue Book

All parents of children born in NSW receive a copy of 'My Personal Health Record' (the Blue Book) which has valuable information that may help.

*Becoming a grandparent
is very special.*

*Your support and
encouragement will
make all the difference!*