

Dad's Role in Supporting Breastfeeding

Be a learner. Learn all you can about breastfeeding before your baby is born. Help mom remember the things you learned. Remind her that she makes more milk by feeding more often. Discourage the use of water or formula supplements as this will decrease her milk supply. Check to see if she and the baby are positioned correctly. Help to make her comfortable. Bring her a glass of water or juice as she will be thirsty when breastfeeding. What a good father you are!

Be a coach. Mom needs encouragement at first so if things don't get off to a good start, be positive. You'll be a hero forever. Get help for mom if breastfeeding is not going well.

Be patient. It takes time to learn a new process. Don't expect mom and baby to be able to master breastfeeding at first. Don't be quick to offer a bottle of formula because mom is tired, you want to help, or you are worried how much the baby is really getting. Your intentions are good, but this causes mom's milk supply to decrease. Instead, help mom and baby in other ways.

Your baby is getting enough breastmilk if he or she:

- has 3 or more stools each day (a stool after every feeding is ideal for the first month; then stooling may slow down),
- has 5 or more very wet diapers a day,
- is steadily gaining weight.

Be a protector. Protect mom and baby from being overwhelmed by visitors and well-meaning relatives. Protect her from people who may upset her. Protect mom and baby from anything in your life that is overwhelming or negative. That's one reason dads are so important!

Be a helper. Giving birth is a major life event. Mom needs help getting back into the swing of things. Help with housework and cooking OR find someone who can help. Entertain and care for older children so mom can focus on the new baby.

Be a friend. Mom needs love and support more now than at any time in her life. Be there for her! Entertain her, comfort her, love her. She will think you are wonderful!

Be a father. Hold and love your new baby. Change his diaper, bathe him, play with him, take him for a walk, sing and talk to him. You are so special to your new baby. Look at how your baby's face lights up when you come into the room!

Be a part of the breastfeeding process. Bring your baby to mom when he is hungry. Sometimes, sit and relax with mom and baby while mom breastfeeds. Tell them how much you love them. Tell mom what a good mother she is and what a wonderful thing she is doing for your child. Think about what a wonderful thing you are doing in supporting breastfeeding!

Resource Numbers

Texas Lactation Support Hotline
1-800-514-MOMS
www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/bf/bf1.shtm

La Leche League Hotline
1-800-525-3243
www.lalecheleague.org

Family Health Services Information & Referral Line
1-800-422-2956
www.dshs.state.tx.us/mch/babylove.shtm

Be a breastfeeding advocate. Tell all your friends and relatives how wonderful breastfeeding is and how wonderful your wife is to care for your child in such a special way.

Be proud of your efforts. You are being a man. You are protecting and supporting mom and baby. How special you are! How loved you are! What a wonderful father you are!

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