

How Dads Can Support Their Breastfeeding Partner

Breastfeeding is a family affair. It takes time, practice, patience, and teamwork. As a dad, you may feel left out if your partner breastfeeds your new baby. But you play an important role.

Here are ways you can offer support and encouragement, and be involved every step of the breastfeeding journey.



Before Baby Arrives

- **Learn the breastfeeding basics**, including what to expect during your baby's first days.
- **Set goals.** Work with your partner to come up with a birth plan and breastfeeding goals. This will help you get on the same page about what breastfeeding success looks like.
- **Join her for a breastfeeding class.** The more you know about breastfeeding, the more you can support your partner.
- **Get to know your delivery hospital or birthing center.** If possible, take a tour or class at your hospital or birthing center with your partner. Ask about its breastfeeding practices to ensure your delivery team can help you meet your breastfeeding goals.



At the Hospital or Birthing Center

- **Share your breastfeeding plan.** Let your hospital staff know that your partner wants to breastfeed.
- **Focus on skin-to-skin time.** Hold your baby skin to skin between feedings.
- **Ask for help.** If your partner is having trouble with breastfeeding, ask hospital staff for help. Or encourage your partner to contact her healthcare team for support.



At Home

- **Help take care of your baby.** You can soothe, bathe, change, dress, cuddle, and burp your baby. You can also keep your partner company during feedings and make sure that she has plenty to eat and drink.
- **Watch for hunger signs.** Learn your baby's hunger cues so that you can bring your baby to your partner for nursing sessions.
- **Limit visitors.** New moms need plenty of rest! Help limit the number of visitors that come to your home.
- **Go the extra mile.** Help with chores. Run errands, cook, clean, and do laundry. If mom needs something while she's breastfeeding, offer to get it for her. If you have other children, take care of them so your partner can focus on breastfeeding.
- **Offer encouragement.** Help your partner feel good about herself. Tell her you're proud of her and that she's doing a great job. Try to do something special for her.
- **Defend your choice.** Not everyone will understand your and your partner's decision to breastfeed. You can be the first line of defense against negative comments and anyone who tries to discourage your partner from breastfeeding.



Signs Your Baby Is Hungry

Watch for these signs that your baby is hungry, and then feed baby right away:

- Fists moving to mouth
- Head turning to look for the breast
- Becoming more alert and active
- Sucking on hands or lip-smacking
- Opening and closing mouth



For more information about breastfeeding, visit <https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/>

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