

# Family and Friends Can Make Breastfeeding a Success

Breastfeeding is natural for women. During the early days after birth, some babies and mothers need time to get it right. What other people say or believe may affect the success of breastfeeding. Family and friends can help women successfully give their babies the best start in life.

Family and friends can help in the following ways:

1. **Become informed.** Get as much information about breastfeeding as you can. Talk to friends, relatives, other breastfeeding families and health professionals.
2. **Offer encouragement.** A new mother may worry that she does not have enough milk for her baby. Most women have more than enough breastmilk. Tell her that breastfeeding is the best way to feed her baby. Tell her that you believe in her. Tell her that you are there to help.
3. **Do not disturb.** Limit visitors, telephone calls and other interruptions during the early weeks after the baby is born.
4. **Encourage rest.** A new mother needs as much rest as possible. Help with everyday things like meal preparation, dishes and laundry, keeping the home tidy and caring for other children.
5. **Care for the baby.** Babies cry for many reasons – not just for hunger. Learn different ways of comforting the baby, such as walking, singing or dancing. Bathing and changing are other ways to learn about the baby as a person.
6. **Have realistic expectations.** A new baby changes life forever. It is normal to have mixed feelings about these changes. Giving up breastfeeding will not end these feelings. Breastfeeding will help both the mother and baby.
7. **Get help.** If the mother feels that things are not going well with breastfeeding, call for help. Toronto Public Health provides breastfeeding help to all mothers and can connect her to other breastfeeding supports.
8. **Remember that each mother is different.** Ask her what she feels would help her.

Breastfeeding benefits everyone in the family. Toronto Public Health provides breastfeeding support and information through home visits, telephone counseling and parenting groups. To find out more about these services or for breastfeeding information, call **Toronto Health Connection, 416-338-7600** or visit our Web site at [www.toronto.ca/health](http://www.toronto.ca/health).