

Module 1B- “What about my life?”

Frequently Asked Questions about Lifestyle and Breastfeeding

What I learn: Breastfeeding can work for my life!

I will be really busy with work and school. I don’t know how I can possibly breastfeed.

Response: Breastfeeding is actually very convenient. Although the idea of breastfeeding might seem overwhelming at first, there is a lot of flexibility. Any amount of breast milk you can give your baby is a good thing. You can breastfeed in person whenever you and the baby are together. You can either pump or express milk by hand for when you are not there, but you don’t have to: if it is less than 4 hours, you can breastfeed before and after you get home. Read more about all of this below.

I can’t run around with a breast pump- what do you suggest?

Response: You can pump or hand express at home and leave the milk with your child care provider. Also, if your child care provider can bring you the baby during the day or if you can drop into the day care, you can breastfeed during the day. Research shows that this helps women continue breastfeeding while working and going to school.

Do I need a breast pump?

Response: No. You don’t need a breast pump. Many women don’t express milk at all and breastfeed at the breast only, and some women choose to hand express their milk instead of using a pump. If you can do a breast self exam, it will be easy to get comfortable expressing your own milk. Your breasts are yours- you can learn to hand express easily.

How do I get a pump if I want one?

Response: You can rent a pump from the hospital if you know before you are leaving. WIC will give you a great electric pump free if your baby is 3 weeks old, you are only breastfeeding and you will be separated for 4 or more hours during the week. Your doctor or nurse can order a pump for you from Medic Home Health Supply that your insurance covers. You can buy one at a drug store but the double electric ones are expensive.

If I want the baby to take bottles of breast milk in addition to breastfeeding at my breast, when do I start?

Response: Good question. Wait till 3-4 weeks of age to offer a bottle – this way your breast milk supply will not be at risk.

I heard you have to let the father or grandmother or someone else offer the bottle or the baby will refuse it.

Response: That is not true. You can do it- again just wait 3-4 weeks so your milk supply is protected.

What if the baby refuses a bottle?

Response: Usually that is not a problem if you start one a day by 3-4 weeks of age. Older infants who can sit up (4-5+ months old) can use a sippy cup for breast milk.

Don't breastfeeding babies get up a lot more often in the night? I need sleep!

Response: Someone can bring you the baby, and there are no bottles or mixing or heating- everything is ready to go when you are breastfeeding. We recommend safe sleeping- baby on his or her back in a safe place- you can use a bassinette or your Pac N Play or a dresser drawer placed right next to your bed- just reach over and breastfeed and put the baby back.

Won't I miss out on the WIC benefits if I breastfeed?

Response: Not true. You will get an expanded breastfeeding mother food packet from WIC for yourself since you are making the milk for the baby. And WIC can give free pumps to moms who breastfeed only, baby is 3 weeks old, and mom and baby may be apart 4 hours a day for work or school.

If I breastfeed does this mean I can't ever go out drinking?

Response: You can have a night out. But you should not feed the baby when you are drunk or buzzed, and we don't want to encourage you to drink daily. You can pump before having a drink or two and give that milk to the baby till your buzz is gone. If you are buzzed (or drunk) **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE SOMEONE TO CARE FOR THE BABY**- the milk is not the biggest worry.

What about the medicines I take for my blood pressure (or for depression)?

Response: Not all medicines are OK for breastfeeding, but there is at least one or more that are fine with breastfeeding for any health condition. Ask your doctor to check on the internet for "ToxNet" and Lactmed (National Library of Medicine site) or Thomas Hale's site.

The baby's father does not want me to breastfeed because it will mess up our relationship.

Response: Stop right there. Your breasts are yours. You can define the relationship with dad. Why wouldn't he want his baby to be smarter, faster and bigger than every other baby? Does he know that Michael Jordan was breastfed? And not for a short time either!

How can you say breastfeeding is easy when the first 2 weeks are so hard?

Response: Once you get through the first few days to weeks, breastfeeding is so easy it's crazy.

The baby's father feels he will be left out if I breastfeed- what can he do?

Response: Lots. And not just diaper changing. See another module- he can bathe the baby, hold the baby skin-to-skin on his chest, carry the baby around and talk to the baby. He can bring the baby to you to breastfeed, position and help with breastfeeding, and burp the baby between breasts. No father is left out – breastfeeding increases the closeness of the family.

Doesn't breastfeeding tie you down?

Response: No, the baby ties you down.

Will breastfeeding make me tired?

Response: Honestly yes you will be tired. But the hormones of breastfeeding give you good feelings and bonding and closeness. Sleep when the baby sleeps if you can. Get help with your other kids and cooking if possible.