

Grandparents of Breastfeeding Families



Congratulations! Your grandchild is going to get the best nutrition possible by getting breastmilk. Your support will be very important for your son or daughter. You have a lot to offer!

The way mothers are encouraged to feed their babies now may be different from what you learned when you had your babies.

There is much research showing that breastfeeding is important for baby's health and mother's health. Each generation builds on previous knowledge and learns more about the impact of nutrition on the growing child.

Some things to keep in mind:

- **Breastfeeding provides your grandchild** with all the nutrients he or she needs. Breastmilk strengthens the immune system against illnesses and infections. It reduces the risk of allergies, asthma, certain cancers, Type 2 diabetes and more. It benefits mom's health as well as reduces her risk for diabetes, osteoporosis, breast cancers, postpartum bleeds and more.
- **Health Canada recommends** only breastmilk for the first six months. At six months babies need iron rich solid food such as meat, cereals, vegetables, and fruits. No particular order.
- **Health Canada encourages** breastfeeding to two years and beyond. The longer baby breastfeeds, the more health benefits baby gets.
- **Breastfed babies need to feed a lot.** The more they feed, the more milk is made. They feed both for food and comfort. They digest breastmilk more easily and are growing quickly.

Nobody can do for little children what grandparents do. Grandparents sort of sprinkle stardust over the lives of little children.

~Alex Haley

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- **No schedules.** Parents are encouraged to feed on demand and feed according to the cues that their babies display.
- **Babies don't need pacifiers and bottles.** These items cut into suckling time and interfere with breastfeeding.
- **Colicky babies are rarely the result** of mom's diet. It can interfere in mom's confidence by suggesting the food she ate last time has caused crying and colic.
- **Babies need lots of skin-to-skin contact** with loved ones - especially with mom. Skin-to-skin contact makes baby feel more secure and less stressed. It also stabilizes temperatures, blood sugars and increases breastfeeding success.

How can you support this growing family?

Here is what new mothers have said:

- "...always came and did my dishes."
- "...never questioned my decision to breastfeed my son."
- "...encouraged me on the days that were challenging."
- "... I felt alone, so my mother-in-law visited with me while I breastfed."
- "... my mom never breastfed herself but wanted me to succeed so she came with me to the Infant Feeding Clinic."
- "...gave me a hug when I needed it."

A grandchild is a miracle, but a renewed relationship with your own children is even a greater one.

~T. Berry Brazelton



The **Baby-Friendly Initiative** is a world-wide strategy that sets standards for infant feeding.

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General ways you can help:

- Give expecting and new moms opportunities to explore their questions and discuss their concerns.
- Refer pregnant women to reliable breastfeeding information or supports.
- Share stories about feeding infants in a helpful way.
- Let families know that skin-to-skin holding, keeping baby nearby and feeding on cue are good regardless of feeding choice.

Specific ways you can help:

- Take care of the parents - your grown-up babies. Look for ways to help mom and dad with household chores (cleaning, laundry, shopping, meal preparation, entertaining visitors and more). Ask mom what she would like you to do.
- Listen to her needs. Often they just need to express their thoughts and feelings to someone they trust and love. Listening is often the best answer.
- Encourage them as new parents. Remind them of the things that they are doing right for your grandchild. Encourage them to seek out help if they are experiencing difficulties with any parenting skills, like breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is a skill to learn between mom and baby—sometimes it takes a while to learn this process.
- You can get baby ready to feed by bringing baby to mom and then burping afterwards.



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- Bring her a drink or snack when she is nursing.
- Care for the older children in the home.
- Praise mom and dad for doing a great job. Recognize that things are different since you were a new parent. Some newer immunizations have been added to protect infants and children.
- Today we know that infants are safer when rear facing for 2 years and beyond in an appropriate car seat. Booster seats are needed until the child is at least 8 years old. Booster seats are needed until the child is at least 4'9 inches or 80lbs or 8 years old.

Enjoy your new role as a grandparent! Grandparents are so important in a child's life. Be flexible and support your children as they become parents. Read their information packages from their healthcare providers and explore the websites below.

To learn more:

- nnhu.org/breastfeeding
- nnhu.org/health-topic/feeding-your-baby
- nnhu.org/health-topic/car-seat-safety
- nnhu.org/health-topics/immunization
- breastfeedinginc.ca

To all of you who have supported a breastfeeding mother, we thank you for all your great help.



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