

## 7 Tips for Successful Breastfeeding

My now 5 ½ year old son was born by emergency c-section making my post birth recovery time challenging because a) I was exhausted, b) he didn't seem to sleep very much and c) I developed a breast infection. Now a) and b) are par for the course when having a baby but c) knocked me senseless. I didn't want to take any more medication given that I had just come off of several after the c-section so I waited to see if the pain would go away. When I reached the point where I would wake up from a restless sleep with tears in my eyes from the excruciating pain and I began having thoughts like "I wish I could die right now, but I can't because I have to feed my baby," I began a round of antibiotics. Within a week or so I felt sane again. Now part of the reason I contracted the breast infection was because I wasn't breastfeeding correctly. It took about 7 to 10 days for my milk to come in and then because of the infection probably 10 weeks for me to quit wondering how the human race survived before bottles and formula! I ended up breastfeeding our son for about 7 months and our daughter about 9 months when it was apparent to me that we were ready to move on to the next phase of our mother/baby relationship. Here are some tips that helped me establish a successful breastfeeding relationship with my children. Mentally prepare yourself that it can take up to 8 to 12 weeks. Some insightful person...maybe a nurse or my lactation consultant, told me "Give it 8 to 12 weeks before making a decision on whether you want to quit breastfeeding." I told myself that 'breastfeeding is important and I can't quit before 12 weeks.' I remember saying that everyday until I was 10 weeks into it and realized "Wow, this isn't so bad. In fact it's pretty darn neat!" It's OK to supplement! In my opinion it is OK to supplement with formula. I was so afraid to supplement because I was repeatedly told that supplementing was the worst thing I could do, which of course made me feel like an awful mom. But let me tell you, if you are exhausted and your baby isn't gaining weight, it is one of the best things you can do. After feeling guilty for a week because my milk wasn't coming in and my baby wasn't gaining weight, I decided to supplement and what a relief. Don't be afraid to take that baby off! Some well meaning nurses told me that when the baby is finished he will fall off. They didn't know my son. He would stay on for over an hour on each side just suckling half asleep if I let him. I remember breastfeeding sessions that would last 90 minutes which when I had to start over again in an hour and a half reduced me to tears. Keep a breastfeeding log. So that you have an idea of how much time you are breastfeeding and maybe even what position you are breastfeeding in, keep a [breastfeeding log](#). Fortunately when our daughter was born, we had an alpha version of our mobile software program, [Baby Insights](#), available. I could easily keep track of my pumping and breastfeeding schedule which helped me understand her feeding patterns and how much milk I was producing. Drink plenty of water. Drinking plenty of fluids, eating well, and getting good rest is a huge contributor to successful breastfeeding. In fact a vast majority of breast milk is water. Keep a bottle of water next to you when you breastfeed. Ask and/or pay for help. You are going to need [breastfeeding support](#). Whether it's a lactation consultant, a post-partum doula, your significant other, or a friend who has breastfed before, ask for help. Ask your spouse to help you keep the breastfeeding log, bring you water, fresh fruit, snacks, and the baby! Relax. I found the more relaxed I was, the more my milk flowed. Lack of sleep and stress actually reduces your body's ability to create breast milk. And worse you may start to resent the process and maybe even your baby!

## About the Author

The author of this article, Aruni Gunasegaram, is the President/Founder of Babble Soft, which offers web and mobile software applications that facilitate communication between caregivers by helping them with [breastfeeding support](#) bottle feedings, mom's pumping, [baby sleep](#) patterns, diapers, immunizations and medicine doses as well as baby's first year photo album. She blogs at [entreMusings](#)

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