

Fathering my Breastfed Baby



Some fathers may feel that the only way to interact with the new baby is to feed him or her and feel a little bit on 'the outside' in the early days as a new family. This is normal and natural. Despite these feelings, fathers are VERY IMPORTANT to mothers and babies and there are many ways that the father can play a role.

Breastfeeding is one of the most valuable gifts that **both** parents can give a baby.
Breastfeeding:

- ✓ Is nutritionally superior
- ✓ Promotes physical and emotional well-being of the baby now and in the future

Bonding and Relationships

A mother is generally a baby's primary caregiver. A father is usually the baby's first extended relationship. From the father, a baby learns differences between voices and smells, being held and cuddled, and being comforted. This bonding is solidified when the father takes on some of baby's care.



Baby-Father Interactions

- ✓ Babies enjoy movement. Dads can take their infants for walks in the stroller or carrier.
- ✓ Fathers can burp and diaper the baby. After nursing, being burped and falling asleep on dad's shoulder shows baby that dad is also a place of comfort.
- ✓ Encourage mom to rest and bring the baby to her for feeds.
- ✓ Consoling a baby during fussy times by rocking, singing or walking. Picking up a fussy or crying baby builds the baby's trust.

Communication is Important

- ✓ Communication between mom and dad is very important.
- ✓ Both parents need the support of the other during this period of major adjustment.
- ✓ Each other can be a safe place to discuss concerns and joys or even frustration and anger.
- ✓ Sometimes you may need to schedule time for talking:
 - Both parents are probably fatigued from interrupted sleep and disruption of normal routines
 - Things don't get done as easily and efficiently while caring for a baby

Check out: www.newdadmanual.ca

Adapted from: Ameda/ Egnell
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