



# Breastfeeding and Balance

Enjoy the best of both worlds

Breastfeeding your baby brings with it so many brilliant benefits; it's free, plentiful, and carefully calibrated to suit your baby throughout every phase of their development. If your baby is sick, for example, your breast milk will create antibodies to help fight the infection. But there's a catch: nursing demands that your breasts be on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Where your baby goes, your breasts must follow, so it's unsurprising that many new mums feel apprehensive about how they'll manage breastfeeding on top of their other commitments. If you have other children to take care of, a job to return to, or are simply trying to share the load equally with your partner, exclusive breast feeding can seem a Herculean undertaking. There is a simple solution.

## A simple solution

If you anticipate that there will be times when you need to leave your baby with other people for more than a few hours, a breast pump is a good idea. For me, breast pumps are a no brainer: if there is a product that can help ease the burden on Mums, and can provide exclusive breast milk for babies, why not use it?

In the early days of my midwifery career, breast pumps were cumbersome contraptions that had a nasty habit of making women look and feel like dairy cows. They also made more noise than a washing machine, dryer, and baby combined. Luckily, the newer models of breast pump are much more user friendly. My pick of the bunch is the NUK Nature Sense electric pump, which banishes all those bothersome features that see many new mums listing a 'barely used breast pump' for sale on Gumtree.

## How to get started with pumping

The NUK Nature Sense Electric Breast pump is beautifully quiet, compact and features many pumping settings, so that you can find the one that best mirrors your own baby's rhythms and sucking power. Most importantly, it allows you to pump without pain or discomfort. It's also very portable, easy to use, and comes with a rechargeable battery. The NUK Nature Sense Electric Breast pump also has four suction rhythms and powers are freely combinable. The preferred setting can also be saved with the memory button - this is perfect for overnight pumping when your eyelids feel so heavy!! Mark my words: there won't be many of these popping up on Gumtree in barely-used condition!

I recommend offering your baby a bottle as soon as possible, whether you intend to breastfeed exclusively or not. Wait any longer than six weeks and there's a good chance your baby will decline milk from anywhere other than the direct source! It's essential that your baby feels comfortable taking a bottle before you begin leaving them in the care of others for longer stretches, especially the millennium mum goes back to work out of the home and believe me you need your little one to take a bottle. If you want to safeguard against panicked text messages from the babysitter ('she won't take the bottle!'), it's best to get your baby used to the bottle from the first week home.

Matching the NUK Nature Sense bottles (while pumping) are perfect for new babies as the teat is designed based on the shape of the nipple during breastfeeding which provides optimal interplay between the tongue, palette and jaw.

### **Breastfeeding hurdles – you've got this!**

Establishing breastfeeding can be uncomfortable in the early days. Your breasts may feel full, engorged and heavy, and your nipples- which, let's face it, have not done much work up to this point! - can become tender, cracked, and extremely painful. The NUK nipple shield is, for so many new mums, the difference between breastfeeding and not breastfeeding. It is so soft and adheres snugly to your nipple providing length for your baby to latch correctly and in turn protects the sore cracked nipples - that's the ultimate win-win solution...

The newer designs are soft, comfortable, and adapt beautifully to the breast. Don't let anyone tell you that shields will cause 'nipple confusion' for your baby, or hinder the establishment of your milk supply, it is much better to have the baby on the breast sucking & this is what the NUK nipple shield allows. You do not have to suffer pain to breastfeed your baby.

I have seen so many new mums beside themselves with the pain of cracked nipples, inverted or flat nipples, and on the brink of giving up breastfeeding. And in almost every instance, a shield is all that's required to get the baby sucking effectively, comfortable and successfully breastfeeding. I have seen so many new mums beside themselves with the pain of cracked nipples, inverted or flat nipples, and on the brink of giving up breastfeeding. And in almost every instance, a shield is all that's required to get them comfortable and successfully breastfeeding.

With a little help, breastfeeding can be a joyous experience for mothers. There's so much information and support available these days you don't need to do it on your own. Before you know it, baby will be grown up and moving on to the next adventure so enjoy these precious moments of closeness while you can.

*Love Midwife Cath xx*

Midwife Cath is a fully-qualified nurse, midwife, maternal and child health nurse. Over her 40-year career, Midwife Cath has delivered over 10,000 babies. Her areas of expertise include women's health, pre-pregnancy, antenatal care and education, pregnancy, labour

and birth, postnatal care, breastfeeding and parenting. Midwife Cath is a proud NUK ambassador.