

Submission no. 406AUTHORISED: 20/6/07 

Subject: Trouble with Breastfeeding

To Whom it may concern:

I was informed on the following website to write to you regarding my experiences with breastfeeding <http://www.bubhub.com.au/community/forums/showthread.php?t=93961>

It wasn't until after my son was born that I was told I have the worst combination in my breasts for feeding - flat nipples and large breasts. Apparently this makes it very difficult for your baby to get a good mouthful of breast in order to feed well. This turned out to be true and combined with my son's inability to get his tongue out under the nipple (apparently a very important aspect of feeding) he began to chomp on my nipple.

The lactation consultants at the hospital did their best with their limited time to try to assist me, but seeing them for 1 out of 16 feeds (in other words once every second day), the damage was being done and I didn't know how to fix it. I had this hand there, this chair, a pillow here and towel wrapped up under here, a finger pushing this part of my breast, trying to get a nipple shield to stay on and all the while doing this in the middle of the night with a screaming baby and no-one by my side.

It wasn't until I saw the Early Childhood Health Nurse when my son was 7 days old that I was finally told that it wasn't normal to have such intense pain when you are breastfeeding. I had developed mastitis, had cracked and bleeding nipples, and thrush on them too. Combined with the sleep deprivation, I was not coping with the pain and stress of it all. I was advised to cease breastfeeding for a few days to allow my nipples to heal. So in the meantime I had to express every 3 hours, feed my son the bottle every 3 hours and then try to sleep for an hour in between. This was an all day cycle.

When it came time to try breastfeeding again I had associated feeding with pain and I was experiencing panic attacks half an hour before every feed, just anticipating how painful it would be. For this I went and saw a Clinical Psychologist because I'd had a couple of severe meltdowns and was in the high risk for Post-natal depression.

I so desperately wanted to breastfeed my baby, I had an abundant supply (that took 4 months to stop dribbling out of my breasts), but I was only able to breastfeed for 10 days, I expressed until my son was 6 weeks old and then couldn't cope with the extra work of expressing any longer and made the agonising decision to bottle feed.

I had very little support from health professionals, it seems that all the emphasis is on breastfeeding and yet for someone like me that couldn't handle to intense pain (which wasn't helped by 3rd degree tearing and 80 stitches down below), there was no support. I found it difficult to get any information about how to bottle feed, what was out there in terms of bottles, teats, formula, how to navigate outside of the house. So for the first 3 months of my sons life I was a recluse, staying at home, ashamed that I had failed to breastfeed my son. I was so disappointed.

I have now progressed past this and realise that it is such a short time in a child's life (6 months is the best that any of my breastfeeding friends have managed), he won't remember it and although we all know breast is best, there needs to be more support and awareness for those people for whom the

choice to breastfeed was taken away by issues with our anatomy.

With my 2nd child I would like to try again, but this time I will be hiring a private lactation consultant to come to my house every day for a while until we can get it.

Thankyou for listening, sorry if I rambled.

Anna Grindley

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