

Hi there,

as per your enquiry into stories of Breastfeeding, I would like to share my experience and thoughts with you.

I am currently breastfeeding my 3 month old son and some of the issues I have come up against in my goal to do this successfully are:

1. Woefully inadequate breastfeeding facilities in the general community. Whilst not a prude, I am a first time mum, so I have yet to breastfeed successfully in 'public'. This is severely limiting on my ability to interact outside of the home with other adults. May I suggest that every public library have breastfeeding facilities?
2. Linked to the first, I feel that the general attitude to breastfeeding in public by the public is still one of tokenistic support only. The one time I did try to breastfeed in public I felt scrutinised and like an exhibit. I feel much much more needs to be done to educate the public on the role lactating mothers have in getting out and about in the community. (Incidentally, this 'disapproval' came from a female work acquaintance who was uncomfortable with me breastfeeding at a lunch)
3. Nipple Nazi's! The wowserism and extremist nature of Early Childhood nurses and midwives in general makes it seem that to do ANYTHING other than breastfeed exclusively is a real crime and that we run the risk of having our babies taken from us because we are unfit mothers. There desperately needs to be an educated and realistic balance in the whole issue of how we nurture and nourish our babies. I have a friend who gives her baby a formula feed last thing at night as it helps her baby sleep through and gives her much needed rest. The Early Childhood nurse made her disapproval well-known in our mothers group and I think this is sad as it is such a one-eyed perspective. Surely a happy and rested mother means a happy and rested baby? I deeply resent being made to feel that if I choose to supplement one feed a day with formula then I am somehow a neglectful mother. God help me if I was unable to breastfeed at all - what would they say then?
4. I think there needs to be a service for a midwife to come and visit lactating mothers once a month for 6 months to make sure everything is okay. I have extremely aching breasts and would love to go to see the doctor but am unable because I have an unsettled baby, don't have a car so would have to walk half an hour to see the doctor and the thought of having a screaming baby in public whilst I endeavour to do so brings me to tears. So I suffer and hope that everything is okay. Not all mothers are mobile and more needs to be done to ensure their needs are met as well as mothers who are able to drive themselves around.
5. I have no family at all in Sydney so my only network to learn is via the internet or through my mothers group. So I think my previous point is all the more important given I don't have my mother/sister/grandmother on hand to help with hints and tips on how to successfully breastfeed.
6. Every suburb needs a breastfeeding clinic. My only means of transport is public transport and there are so few buses available that I can use with a stroller. This makes going across suburbs with a young unsettled baby to a breast-feeding clinic out of the question.