


**Submission no. 148**

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The Secretary of the Committee on Breastfeeding  
House of Representatives  
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Canberra ACT 2600

I am a mother of a 2 month old baby and I am writing this submission because I believe more can be done to promote and encourage breastfeeding in our society. If children are breastfed for at least the first 12 months of life and preferably for the first two years and beyond there are substantial health benefits for :

1. The Child (these health benefits extend into adulthood) - there is significant protection against serious illnesses including gastrointestinal, chest, ear and urinary tract infections and ongoing conditions such as eczema and asthma.
2. The Mother - breastfeeding offers some protection against ovarian cancer, breast cancer and osteoporosis
3. The Community - reduction of demand on the public health system benefits all tax payers. Less need for parents to be absent from work to tend to a sick child benefits employers and fellow employees.

I believe that as a community we cannot afford *not* to do our utmost to promote breastfeeding as the norm in society. Some of the measures that must be implemented to increase the rate of breastfeeding in our society include:

1. Government Funded Media Campaign (TV, Radio etc.) to promote breastfeeding to the general public as the best and the most natural and normal way to feed babies and toddlers. We must get rid of the idea that it is not OK to breastfeed older babies, toddlers and preschoolers.
2. Government Funded Campaign to make Parents-to-be aware of the support services they can access to help them establish and continue breastfeeding.
3. Government needs to set up and fund special lactation clinics. In many cases women who have given birth are

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discharged from hospital before breastfeeding has been established. Some women are discharged even before their milk has come in!!! There needs to be a place where women can go and spend the day (and night) getting help from trained lactation consultants to establish breastfeeding and troubleshoot breastfeeding problems as they arise. Such clinics should have extra lactation consultants that visit mothers in their homes to help with breastfeeding issues, as it is often very difficult for a new mother to leave the house.

4. Government should fund the excellent counselling and community work done by the Australian Breastfeeding Association.

5. There should be at least 6 months of Paid Maternity leave given to women who Breastfeed. Employers should be compelled to give lactating women sufficient Paid breaks to express milk AND they should be compelled to provide appropriate facilities (eg lactation rooms). No one should have to express breast milk in the toilets!!!

6. More public places need to have private spots where mothers can breastfeed in peace and quiet AND AT THE SAME TIME it should be totally acceptable for children to be breastfed in the middle of a coffee shop or food court if that is what their mothers wish to do!

7. Government funding to establish Human Milk Banks and media campaigns to encourage donations so that more infants can benefit from breast milk and avoid exposure to infant formula, especially those born premature or born to women who experience a delay in the onset of lactation.

Sincerely

Claire Nussey