

BREASTFEEDING MYTHS

Moms-to-be and new moms get a lot of baby advice. Although people usually mean well, not all of it is based on fact. Myths about breastfeeding are common. The fact is that breastfeeding is a healthy way to feed your baby. The decision to breastfeed is a personal one, and it should also be an informed one.

MYTH: EVERYONE USES FORMULA.

More women breastfeed than you think. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 80 percent of women in the United States start out breastfeeding³. Research over the past 40 years has proven that mother's milk is an inexpensive and healthy choice for babies.

MYTH: FORMULA HAS MORE VITAMINS THAN BREASTMILK.

In fact, the opposite is true. Formula cannot match the nutrients and vitamins in breastmilk. More importantly, breastmilk has antibodies, which can only be passed from your body to your baby. This is what helps protect your baby from getting sick. Breastmilk is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organization. Breastfeeding is a great choice to ensure your baby's nutrition.

MYTH: BREASTFEEDING MAKES YOUR BREASTS SAG.

Actually, it's pregnancy that stretches the

ligaments of your breast tissue, whether you breastfeed or not. Age, genetics, and the number of pregnancies you've had also play a role.

MYTH: IF YOUR BREASTS ARE TOO SMALL, YOU CAN'T BREASTFEED.

Size and shape of breasts do not affect ability to breastfeed and have nothing to do with how much milk a woman actually makes. This includes women with large areolas (the area around the nipple), flat nipples, and even women who've had breast surgery. (Note: If you've had a massive breast reduction, milk ducts and glands might have been removed, which means you may make less milk.)

MYTH: IF YOUR BREASTS ARE TOO LARGE OR YOU'RE PLUS SIZE, YOU CAN'T BREASTFEED.

Women of all sizes can successfully breastfeed. So if you're a larger mom-to-be or new mom, you should not let the size of your breasts automatically rule it out. If you're big breasted, it may take some extra patience or some assistance from an IBCLC. Plus-size women are more likely to have C-sections, which means your milk might come in a few days later. Depending on the size of your breasts, you may need a little more practice to find a hold that works for you and your baby. But with the right help and support, you can do it!

MYTH: YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO MAKE ENOUGH MILK.

Moms almost always make enough milk to feed their babies. A newborn's stomach is only the size of a hazelnut. If you eat healthy, drink water, and nurse often, your milk supply should be plentiful.

MYTH: BREASTFEEDING SPOILS A CHILD.

After spending nine months growing inside you, it's completely natural for a baby to be attached to his or her mother and vice versa. Despite what you've heard, newborns don't need to learn to fend for themselves at such a young age. In reality, breastfeeding provides a unique bond with your child that can last a lifetime. Research shows that breastfed children grow up to be confident and self-sufficient when parents meet their needs.

MYTH: BREASTFEEDING HURTS.

Breastfeeding is not supposed to be a painful experience. In fact, pain is usually a red flag that something is wrong. Although a baby's latch can be strong, it's not actually biting, not even when the baby is cutting teeth. As with any new skill, there is an adjustment period. See [page 14](#) to learn more.

Learn more about the benefits of breastfeeding for both mom and baby on [page 4](#).

³Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Breastfeeding Among U.S. Children Born 2002-2012, CDC National Immunization Survey, 2015.