

BREASTFEEDING IN PUBLIC



Some mothers feel uncomfortable breastfeeding in public. But remember that you are feeding your baby. You are not doing anything wrong. And even though it may seem taboo in some places, awareness of the support new mothers need is building.

- The federal government and many states have laws that protect nursing women. These laws are based on the recognition of organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the World Health Organization, and many others that breastfeeding is the best choice for the health of a mother and her baby. You can see the laws in your state at the National Conference of State Legislatures website at www.ncsl.org/research/health/breastfeeding-state-laws.aspx.

It is important to believe in yourself and your choice to breastfeed your baby. Remind yourself that you can succeed, and wear your confidence!

Some tips for breastfeeding in public include:

- Wear clothes that allow easy access to your breasts, such as tops that pull up from the waist or button down.
- Use a special breastfeeding blanket around your shoulders.
- Breastfeed your baby in a sling.

Slings or other soft infant carriers are especially helpful for traveling — it makes it easier to keep your baby comforted and close to you. But be aware that infant slings can be a danger. Check with the Consumer Product Safety Commission for warnings before buying a sling.

- Breastfeed in a women's lounge or dressing room in stores.
- Practice breastfeeding at home so that you can make sure you are revealing only as much as you feel comfortable with.
- Face the wall at a restaurant or sit in a booth.

It helps to breastfeed your baby before he becomes fussy so that you have time to get into a comfortable place or position to feed. (Over time, you will learn your baby's early hunger cues.) When you get to your destination, find a place you can breastfeed where you will feel most comfortable.

If someone criticizes you for breastfeeding in public, know the laws where you are and don't be afraid to respond. Most of all, it is important to remember that you are meeting your baby's needs. It isn't possible to stay home all the time, and you should (and can) feel free to feed your baby while you are out and about. You should be proud of your commitment! Plus, no bottles mean fewer supplies to pack and no worries about getting the milk to the right temperature.