



**FEED  
YOUR WAY**

# *Supporting* a breastfeeding family member or friend

Breastfeeding is a unique experience for every parent. Your friend or family member might be having a straight-forward breastfeeding experience; or they may be finding it challenging.

Breastfeeding is natural, but it doesn't always come easily. It can be demanding – both physically and emotionally. You can help to make it a more comfortable and enjoyable experience. For the difficult days, and for all the others, there is lots of free support available.



## How you can help

### Be *present*

One of the biggest things that changes when you have a baby is your social life. We know that many parents choose to stop breastfeeding sooner than they had planned because they felt isolated from family and friends. Lots of people love the time that breastfeeding gives them to spend with their babies, but they also told us that they missed friends and family.

If you have a breastfeeding person in your life, be there for them. Arrange to visit them at home, or a place nearby, to avoid disrupting their feeding schedule. Ask them how they are – and listen to their answer. Find out if there's anything you can do to help.

## Know when to give them *space*

Whilst it's important that breastfeeding families don't feel isolated, there are times when they may value the time alone. Breastfeeding can be exhausting, for both the breastfeeding parent, their partner, and the rest of the family. Read their cues and recognise when they need time and space to recharge.

## Give *moral support*

Doing anything for the first time is scary. That includes breastfeeding in public! It can feel like a big leap to go from feeding in the privacy of your own home to feeding in public surrounded by strangers. The majority of parents we spoke to hadn't had a negative experience of feeding in public. But many said it would have been much easier and less scary if they'd had a friend or family member with them for the first few times. Could you be there to support the breastfeeding person in your life on their first experiences of feeding in public?

## Ask how you can *help*

Many breastfeeding families face similar challenges. If you have a breastfeeding person in your life, try not to assume that you know what's best for them. Some breastfeeding parents choose to feed when they're alone with their baby, but some people like having friends or family keep them company. Don't be worried or ashamed about asking about breastfeeding – or how you can help. You could start with: *“How are you finding it?”* or *“Are there any things I can do to give you more time to feed?”*

## Talk about the *challenges*

For many families, breastfeeding is part of everyday life. However, there is still a reluctance in society to talk openly about breastfeeding, especially the challenging parts. One parent we spoke to said that her friends were so uncomfortable when she spoke about her breastfeeding challenges that she just stopped trying. This led her to feel isolated from her friendship group and stop breastfeeding before she had planned to. Have an honest conversation. Talking about the challenges of breastfeeding is just as important as talking about all of the benefits.

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For more information and useful support visit: [feedyourway.co.uk](https://www.feedyourway.co.uk)

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Making Nottingham a **breastfeeding-friendly** city.



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