



How can a community support its breastfeeding mothers?

Tips for community, family, friends and businesses

Everyone plays an important role to support breastfeeding mothers. We know breastfeeding is valuable for maternal and child health but did you know that breastfeeding is also important for our wider community? Breastfeeding has economic, health and environmental benefits. Breastfeeding is free, it helps to prevent disease and illness in babies and mothers, and there is no waste involved.

Breastfeeding may reduce a mother's risk of breast and ovarian cancer, type 2 diabetes and hypertension. It also reduces a child's risk of a range of illnesses. In turn, this reduces the overall costs to our health system.

What's my role to support breastfeeding women?



Partners, friends and family

- **Be supportive** – spend time with her in cafés, parks or shopping centres as she builds her confidence feeding in public.
- **Be encouraging** – remind her she is doing a great job. Invite her and baby out for a walk or a coffee and always encourage her to be confident breastfeeding in public.
- **Be helpful** – especially in the early days, helping out with the little things can make the world of difference. It could be pouring her a glass of water or helping with other tasks while she feeds the baby.
- **Understand roles may change** – the way you spend time with her may change now there is a new baby. Be flexible and embrace the changes in your relationship. Try new activities or places to visit together, and continue to encourage breastfeeding.

Individuals and the wider community

- Understand the importance of breastfeeding goes beyond the mother and child.
- Understand that women have the legal right to breastfeed in any public space.
- Be supportive of co-workers who access lactation breaks.
- Be positive towards a woman's choice to breastfeed.



Businesses

- Welcome breastfeeding mothers to your business
- Understand that women have the legal right to breastfeed in any public space and women should never be asked to cover up or feed in toilets or restrooms.
- Join the Breastfeeding Welcome Here program **(see over for more information)**





Rights of breastfeeding women

In NSW breastfeeding mothers are protected by Sex Discrimination laws. Under these laws, breastfeeding women:

- Cannot be treated differently to someone who is not breastfeeding (eg when shopping or dining out).
- Should not be denied access to any public venue or location based on their need to breastfeed (even if that space is a 'no food or drink' area).
- Should never be asked to feed in a bathroom or toilet.

If you feel that a breastfeeding mother has been treated unfairly, try speaking with the person or organisation directly, or make an enquiry through the NSW Department of Justice on 1800 670 812 or: adbcontact@justice.nsw.gov.au.

The Breastfeeding Welcome Here Program

The Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)'s Breastfeeding Welcome Here program was developed to improve community acceptability of breastfeeding in public through the promotion of breastfeeding friendly premises. These can be everything from a café to a hairdresser, community centre or public library.

Venues can receive a Breastfeeding Welcome Here sticker to display that they welcome breastfeeding on their premises.

Criteria for breastfeeding friendly venues to display the sticker are:

- A welcoming attitude from staff and management.
- A smoke free environment.
- Room to move a pram.

Visit the ABA Website for more information.
www.breastfeeding.asn.au/services/welcome

Mothers can look for the Breastfeeding Welcome Here sticker when out and about or check our website listings to find a breastfeeding friendly venue.
www.breastfeeding.asn.au/services/welcome/venues



Scan for
video tips and
resources, or visit
bit.ly/BFinPublic



Seeking information and support?

The Helpline is a free service available 24/7. It is staffed by trained volunteer counsellors.

The National Breastfeeding Helpline receives funding from the Australian Government.