

Parent Webinar Series

Breastfeeding, Pumping and Working Webinar Q&A

Below is a list of questions and answers from the breastfeeding webinar presented by Bright Horizons. NH indicates answers by Nancy Holtzman, RN IBCLC CPN while the others were provided by Bright Horizons [Mom to Mom bloggers](#).

Getting Started

Q: Do medicated (e.g. epidural) births affects the ability of the baby to latch on right after work?

NH: Possibly. Injected narcotics (like Demerol) certainly can make babies groggy at the time of birth and for the first day as well, as they have a harder time clearing the med from their system. Epidurals can make breastfeeding a little more challenging for some women because IV Fluid is bolused when a woman receives an epidural. This fluid overload is needed to keep the mother's blood pressure stable with the epidural, but can cause a lot of swelling in the mom, which gradually translates to more swelling and breast engorgement on days 3-5. Severe engorgement can be a significant breastfeeding complication.

Q: For each feeding, do you feed from both breasts or one only each feeding?)

NH: Initially it's a good idea to offer both breasts at most feedings. Some moms will almost always nurse from both breasts, some will evolve into a pattern where they feed from one breast per feeding, or sometimes baby will take one or both breasts. I recommend a good breastfeeding basics class and a great breastfeeding book for basic info.

Q: I am going to be home from work for six months before I go back to work. When should I start pumping? I have a 2 year old as well. Should I start pumping from the very beginning?

NH: If you want to have milk on hand and in the freezer, I would suggest beginning to express after feedings starting around 2-3 weeks and slowly boost production and begin to stash milk in the freezer for future use.

Rookie Mom: I would recommend starting as early as possible. Milk freezes so well and once I got back to work I was kicking myself that I hadn't started earlier. Plus, even before you go back it's nice to have a small stash so you can go out for a few hours.

Q: How many times shall I breastfeed exclusively a day after six months?

NH: Exclusive breastfeeding is the term used when the baby is only receiving breastmilk. Since babies typically begin "solid" foods around six months, they are no longer exclusively breastfed once solids are introduced.



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Breastfeeding patterns vary by baby, feeding preferences and parenting styles. Some babies may nurse four times a day, others may nurse 10 times a day. Many variables and partially parent-controlled.

Nourish Mom: It depends on the baby and how much food your infant is eating. My son is 7 months and I breastfeed or he gets a pumped bottle 5-7 times a day.

Q: Any suggestions regarding thrush? I had it with both of my two children and am very fearful about it for #3.

NH: Some women are more susceptible to thrush (yeast infections). If you require antibiotics during labor & birth (Group B Strep for example) you are also at greater risk. I would suggest reading about recurrent yeast infections because some dietary changes may help, use of pre- and pro-biotics, especially if antibiotics are used, washing bras and bra pads in very hot water, dilute vinegar rinses, etc. Thrush is common, but also sometimes sore nipples or breast pain can be from other common breastfeeding complications and are misdiagnosed as thrush. Hopefully #3 will go smoothly for you - best wishes!

Rookie Mom: I had thrush too. It's the worst!! Regular use of APNO (all purpose nipple ointment) for me and eating yogurt with lots of cultures for both me and my son seemed be the only thing that made a difference.

Breastmilk

Q: My baby is 6 months old today and I have been adding rice cereal to her breastmilk. Do you recommend giving cereal in the bottle?

NH: I don't recommend adding cereal to the bottle unless specifically suggested by a gastroenterologist as part of a treatment for reflux. The recommendation to introduce solid foods around six months is for practice and exploration and isn't about nutrition. It will take several months before the intake makes a difference in the diet and that is okay. Starting solid foods is about learning new feeding behaviors like opening the mouth and moving food from spoon to swallow.

Q: How long, ideally, should a baby's diet include breastmilk?

NH: The recommendations are to exclusively breastfeed for about the first six months, then gradually introduce iron-fortified solid foods to complement the breastmilk diet. Breastmilk should be continued through the first full year of life and beyond as long as desired by mother and child.

Q: Can your milk be too rich?

NH: Generally not. The breastmilk components in mother's milk is surprisingly consistent across demographics, geography, age, etc. Human women make similar breastmilk regardless of their intake, diet, etc. as long as they are receiving adequate calories and fluids. Eating well (or eating only junk food) during



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breastfeeding really doesn't have much impact on the quality of the breastmilk - but it DOES have an impact on the mother's own health, weight and well-being. It is difficult to make breastmilk more or less fatty based on mother's intake. She can eat Omega oils (or take supplements) and possibly increase the DHA and ARA (LCPUFAs - long chain poly-unsaturated fatty acids that are known to enhance neurologic/brain development in babies) but really can't make her milk more or less creamy.

Q: Is there a difference in the makeup of breastmilk at the beginning of a feeding vs. the end? If so, does it mean that if you pump after feeding the baby, you're not getting the right mix of nutrients in the pumped milk?

NH: When it comes to breastmilk, it's all good. It's true that when a breast is full (at the beginning of the feeding), the milk is more diluted so the fat content is lower (some people call this foremilk) and toward the end of the feeding, the fat in the milk is more concentrated (creamier) so the milk is actually more caloric and more satiating. But the nutrients themselves don't really change very much. Breastmilk is always changing - morning milk vs evening milk, Monday's milk vs Tuesday's milk, milk at 1 month vs milk at 3 months. It's still all good, and mom's own expressed milk is the best option for a baby when mom is not on hand to breastfeed directly. From the breast, freshly expressed, then frozen breastmilk, is the order of "preference" but all of it is good.

Supply

Q: What about using fenugreek as a way to increase your milk output?

NH: Many mothers do find that it helps boost their supply. It's probably safe, and may work for some, but research is unclear. Capsules are better than teas because they are more concentrated. Nature's Way, 610mg capsules, 3 caps, 3 times a day with food, is the typical dose. You'll know you have a good amount in your system when underarms and urine smell faintly like maple syrup. Women with severe hay fever or unstable diabetes should avoid Fenugreek but in general it is safe and has been used in cooking and as a supplement for hundreds of years.

Q: You mentioned dark beer as a stimulant for increasing breastmilk. How much/when should you drink? Can you drink close to a feeding?

NH: I did mention dark beer but did not mean to suggest or endorse it as a measure to increase milk production. There are many "rumored" things that people think may increase milk supply and dark beer is one of them. Also, fenugreek, oatmeal, flaxseed, lots of water, etc are things people commonly mention. You may also like to view my "Concerns about Milk Supply" webinar available on demand at <http://www.parentingstartshere.com/index.php/breastfeeding-chat-learn/> - I do discuss this topic. In terms of



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alcohol intake when breastfeeding, I would suggest limiting to the occasional celebratory drink - a glass of wine or a beer once in a while. No need to pump and dump after one drink - but best to wait about 2 hours after drinking alcohol before breastfeeding so that alcohol level is lowered or reduced from breastmilk. It is not trapped in breastmilk, easily moves back into bloodstream and to liver to be metabolized out.

Q: I'm a mom who is pumping exclusively. I've heard rumors that moms who only pump tend to "dry up" quicker than those who are actually feeding from the breast. Is this true? I'm trying to go for 1 year (only 214 more days left - not that I'm counting!).

NH: As long as you continue to remove milk frequently and thoroughly and do not add estrogen containing birth control (or become pregnant), you will continue to produce milk. Skin to skin holding, and taking a bath with your baby are nice ways of encouraging your oxytocin and Prolactin levels too. I recommend that pumping moms keep a log and track their volumes. You will soon spot patterns (About to get your period? Skipped a pumping session? Forgot to eat or drink much the day before?). You may be able to get down to pumping 5 - 6 times in 24 hours if you can maintain your supply goals (typically try to stay 120% of your baby's current daily intake). I hope you already have a hands free pumping bra.

Organized Mom: Good for you!! I've heard this rumor too but I have friends who did this successfully. I don't know what will happen with you but you have the right attitude and it sounds like determination. I've answered a few questions on keeping your supply up and I do think you should monitor what's going on. If your supply seems to be going down for a consistent amount of time, start drinking a lot of water. You might just be dehydrated and not know it! Good luck!

Q: What can a woman do who is having low levels of estrogen (and issues such as vaginal tears) due to breastfeeding?

NH: It's true that estrogen may interfere with breastfeeding, but the more established supply is, less impact, possibly. Also could try using personal lubricants to see if that provides enough symptom relief. But if you need the estrogen cream, try it, see how it goes, if impacts supply becomes a problem, you can choose to stop the cream, should be a reversible issue.

Q: I breast fed and pumped at work for my first baby but I never had any "extra" milk. How do you create "extra" milk so I can go to the gym, and do other things and not worry about there not being enough milk?

NH: I would recommend pumping after breastfeeding, starting around 2-3 weeks so that you can both increase production, and begin slowly stashing away a few ounces a day without "taking milk away" from baby,



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since baby nurses first.

Organized Mom: Personally, I pumped on the weekends too. Especially if I knew we were going to go out the next week. I would nurse first thing in the morning and then immediately pump. That gave me a few extra bottles and ultimately milk I could freeze.

Q: I would like to know how to increase my milk supply while already pumping. I currently pump 3 times at work and before bed and barely make enough, if at all. Any suggestions to increase supply while pumping?

NH: Make sure your pump flanges are the right size and that you have the highest quality pump available to you (maybe upgrade temporarily to a Medela Symphony hospital grade rental). Try a variety of other pumping tricks and techniques like pumping at bedtime or if your baby wakes up and nurses in the middle of the night. Remember that maximum breastmilk intake is around 5-6 months so if you can 'keep up' to that point, you're golden, because you can gradually begin offering and increasing solid foods around six months - breastmilk intake will not increase beyond where it is at around 5 months.

Organized Mom: Water!!! I can't say this enough! Drink lots and lots of water. I used to drink up to 48 oz. a day and found the next day my supply to be really high. You also may find that if you pump once on Sunday, you will remove some of the pressure.

Q: I have a double pump, but I often pump only on side at a time. Will this result in a lower supply?

NH: It won't, but in general "Double Pumping, Hands Free, Hands On" is the way to go for maximum milk output in the least amount of time. Good reasons to single pump would be if you are nursing on one side and pumping the other. But if you are going to sit and pump for 10-15 min. you might as well do both breasts rather than one. You'll get more milk by double pumping for 15 min. than you would pumping each side for 10 min, which takes longer also.

Q: I plan to breastfeed exclusively for the first 3 months, then have my BH center formula feed during the day and to breastfeed at night and in the morning. I want a backup pump. What type would be best? Do you have recommendations for maintaining the breastfeeding relationship?

NH: I almost always recommend a double automatic electric pump like the Medela FreeStyle or Pump in Style. It will work reliably and allow you to express both breasts at the same time over about 15 minutes. A single pump is much more time consuming and less effective. You'll get more milk by double pumping for 15 min. than you would pumping each side for 10 min, which takes longer.



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You'll probably benefit from pumping at least once (lunchtime or early afternoon) to bring home SOME milk but more importantly to keep comfortable and keep some of your milk supply up. You'd need to express at least twice probably three times to bring home all the milk to feed your baby exclusive breastmilk, so by pumping once a day at work, you'd still be using formula for 2+ feedings/day at childcare, BUT this would make it more likely that you'd be able to continue breastfeeding part time. Otherwise your supply will likely dip significantly and your baby will quickly become accustomed to the rapid easy flow from the bottle and fuss and refuse to work and wait at the breast especially since her efforts will yield less milk. So as a transition and to keep your options open, my suggestion is to plan to express at least once a day on your return to work for the first month - then decide how you'd like to proceed after that point.

Q: My baby, almost 5 months, became unrestful during breastfeeding. She would pull out after only a few minutes. What caused this? Is it an indication that my milk supply is not enough? Shall I use formula as supplement?

NH: I would wonder about milk production but also about the number of bottles baby is receiving and the flow rate of the bottle. If baby is getting daily bottles where the milk flows rapidly and easily, and then comes to the breast where he needs to work and wait, it's not surprising that he may soon fuss and protest at the breast, especially when he learns that by fussing at the breast, he'll be rewarded with a bottle. So make sure your milk supply remains strong by nursing when you're together, pumping when you're apart, using breast compression when breastfeeding, switching side to side several times if that seems to help, and try to avoid supplementing with the bottle when you are home as it can become a downward spiral away from breastfeeding if that is not your plan.

Q: If my milk supply has decreased and I need to supplement with formula, is it nutritionally beneficial for me to continue pumping? Is any amount of breastmilk good? Or do babies only benefit from a certain amount of oz.?

NH: Yes, any amount of breastmilk is beneficial - and is dose dependant. Some is better than none, and more is better than some. You need to determine what works for you and your family. Take it week by week, no need to decide at the beginning what your long term plans are. As your baby is very close to beginning solid foods, that will help take some of the pressure off you to "be her everything" when it comes to food. Especially if your child is in childcare, breastmilk provides her with an immune boost and antibodies to help her fight infections.



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Breastmilk Storage

Q: How long can pumped milk remain in refrigerator - several days? And with moms who don't have private office, what are some suggestions?

NH: Breastmilk is generally good in the fridge for as long as 5-8 days. If it looks ok, smells ok and baby willing to drink it, assume it is FINE. If you don't have access to a fridge at work, no problem, you'll need a Cooler Bag (bigger than the little one that often comes with pumps) - get the kind that would hold a 12-pack, keep about 3 frozen water bottles in there for your cold source (you can drink them as they slowly melt during the day) and it will keep your milk (and pump parts!) cold during your work day and the commute.

Q: How much of a freezer supply would you suggest having before returning to work?

NH: Breastmilk in the freezer is like money in the bank. The more you have, the more secure you feel. People have very different amounts, and however much you have, you wish you had more, it's never enough :) You'll need enough to cover your first day back at work, and will likely want a back up beyond that as much as you can stash ahead of time. When back at work, typically the milk you pump Monday is the milk baby drinks Tuesday, and the milk you pump Tuesday is the milk for Wednesday, so the baby is mostly receiving freshly expressed breastmilk and the freezer supply is there in case of emergencies. And since "life happens", you'll be grateful to have it there, but don't want to dip into it too often or rely on it. And you do want to replenish it as soon as possible.

Rookie Mom: As much as possible! I didn't use the freezer stash at first but then my son started drinking more with each bottle and inevitably there were days I couldn't fit in all my pumping sessions so that freezer supply became a lifeline. I only started building mine about a month before I went back to work and I wish I had started sooner.

Q: Can I store my milk in a deep freezer?

A: A deep freezer is great - temperature is more stable and the door is opened far less often. Breastmilk is probably good for 6-12 months or longer in a deep freeze.

Q: Can you discuss products for freezing? Bottles or bags ? Both?

NH: Typically women will use bottles to store in the fridge (and can feed out of too) and the plastic milk storage bags for the freezer to save space and money. Freeze them flat, then stack tidily in the freezer.



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Rookie Mom: I used the Medela bags which I liked because I could label them and freeze them flat and then stack them to help save on freezer space.

Q: If you are pumping 3 or 4 times at work and the Medela bag only comes with space for four bottles, how do you collect and then store the breastmilk?

NH: I suggest you get a cooler bag (bigger than the little one that often comes with pumps) that would hold a 12-pack. Keep about 3 frozen water bottles in there for your cold source (you can drink them as they slowly melt during the day) and it will keep your milk (and pump parts!) cold during your work day and the commute. You'll need to bring six bottles and caps, to double pump three times during the workday. You can also pump into milk storage bags if you prefer.

Organized Mom: I used to combine my milk. For example, my morning feedings yielding 2 bottles, but the later ones only 1/2 so I just combined the milk. There are suggested guidelines on combining milk so make sure you do your research before doing this just to be safe. If you pump more than all 4 bottles, you can store some in a refrigerator or you can even store milk at room temperature. Kellymom.com has some guidelines on this. <http://kellymom.com/bf/pumpingmoms/milkstorage/milkstorage/>

Q: If the baby does not finish a bottle, can you put it back into the fridge for later?

NH: "Off the record", yes. Use it when baby wakes up, or within a few hours. It will not be good for longer term storage, and it doesn't really matter if you put back in the refrigerator and then re-warm, or if you leave on counter and feed at room temperature. It's less an issue of bacteria, and more an issue of the amylase, a digestive enzyme that begins to break down the carbohydrates (milk sugars) in the milk.

Q: What's the best way to defrost milk?

Nourish Mom: I put the bag of frozen milk in a bowl with warm water if I need to add it to a bottle quickly. Or place it in the fridge overnight if I don't need it until the next day.

Tip from Participant: In terms of defrosting milk, I recommend putting the bags in a zip top bag and then in warm water or fridge overnight. Sometimes the bags get a hole during freezing and the zip top bag will hold any milk that leaks as it thaws.

Feeding Amounts

Q: How many ounces of expressed breast milk should I provide the daycare for my baby?

NH: Most breastmilk-fed babies will gradually increase their bottle size slowly, half ounce by half ounce,



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maxing out at five or six ounces, typically by 5-6 months old. At twelve weeks, you could anticipate about three bottle feedings of 3 or 4 ounces, plus a little extra "snack pack" just in case. So that would be about 15 ounces for a ten hour separation. Gradually bottle size will slowly increase but at 5 ounces, assume roughly 18 oz for a ten hour day apart.

Nourish Mom: It depends on how long you will be away from your baby and your baby's size. I started my 3 month old with 3 4-oz bottles for an 8 hour day and moved up to 6-oz bottles once he was 12-14 lbs. At first I sent an extra bottle just in case but stopped when I became more experienced.

Q: My child seems to be going through her milk that I send to her daycare quickly. Is there any information that I can provide to my daycare provider about the amount she should be eating?

NH: I would suggest making sure you're using the slowest flow bottle nipple your baby & caregiver tolerates. It should take 20 min. to drink a full bottle feeding (depending on age/size of baby, that could range from 3-5 ounces). Also, PACED and responsive bottle feeding, meaning feeding in an upright position so bottle is almost horizontal (gives baby more control and also slows the flow of milk by gravity) rather than a more traditional bottle feeding position where the baby is reclined and bottle held in a dominant, 45 degree position (which makes the milk flow faster and baby has no choice but to chug or choke). Sometimes caregivers are accustomed to the larger volumes of milk that a formula fed baby may consume whereas breastmilk fed babies take a smaller volume of milk.

Organized Mom: You may want to provide smaller bottles for your center. I found my center was dumping unused breastmilk because they are required to in many states. Once breastmilk has been warmed, it can't be reused (although the actual rules do vary). Ask what the rules are for your center and then perhaps give some small bottles. That way if your child finishes a 6 oz. bottle and still seems hungry, the center has a 2 oz. option. You could provide some 2 oz. freezer bags for these kinds of situations. My center stored the freezer bags in their large refrigerator because the small classroom freezer didn't maintain temperature.

Pump Care

Q: Do you recommend a soap that does not have any harsh chemicals since I am worried about contamination or residue?

A: In general using any standard soap should be fine; it does not need to be anti-bacterial. When cleaning bottles and pump parts, the most important thing is to use soap, warm water and friction (bottle brush) and rinse well.

Q: You mentioned making sure you had the right size pump flange for greatest comfort and output. What is the best way to check for proper fit?

NH: Pump flanges should be comfortable and effective. Make sure vacuum strength isn't too high, make sure



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you're not pumping for too long periods of time, and try adding a drop of olive oil to reduce friction to see if that helps any minor discomfort. If breasts still feel full after pumping and you are not able to remove milk easily with the pump, or if pumping makes your nipples sore because they are rubbing against the sides of the flange tunnel, you would probably benefit from trying a larger size. I find many women benefit from upgrading to a larger flange - often the 27mm is a better fit.

Q: Hi, exclusively pumping mom again - is it possible to burn out a pump? Since I pump between 6-7 times in 24 hours (and I plan on doing so for a full year), I'm scared of burning out my pump.

NH: Yes, but if you have a high quality pump it should make it through this lactation phase without problem. They typically do last through 2 or more babies, though as you point out, you are a "heavy" user. See how it goes. Another option is to get a hospital grade rental (Symphony by Medela) to use at home and then use your more portable pump for work or other on-the-go needs. But when you're home, you can be pumping with the best, but less portable, pump. (PS - You rock. It's hard work but you can do it, and your baby will benefit.)

Q: How do you prepare an electric pump (Medela Freestyle) for storage for a year or more between babies?

NH: Clean it well with disinfectant wipes or just wet paper towels, DRY WELL, let air dry completely, store in attic rather than basement - hot/dry is better than cool/damp if possible. Sterilize pump parts (tubing, bottles, bits & pieces) by boiling like spaghetti, DRY WELL, store in open zip lock bag. Toss bottle nipples, those will need to be replaced with new baby.

Organized Mom: Personally, I cleaned everything really well and then stored it in a closet in the main part of my house so the temperature was more regulated. I had no problems when I pulled it out for my second child.

Q: How often do you need to sterilize your pump parts?

NH: Just as often as you sterilize your cups, plates, spoons and forks. Unless you are pumping for a premature or ill baby in the hospital, "household" clean is clean enough and regular sterilizing is not necessary. Wash your pump parts in soap and hot water and a bottle brush, then air dry. That is a perfectly acceptable way to clean your pump parts. Other ways include microwave steam clean bags, quick clean wipes, or in the dishwasher using a "cage".

Q: How do you know when you should replace the parts on your pump?

NH: If pump is no longer working well, check all connections, power source, pump parts for damage, nicks, air holes. Most parts of the pump (hard plastic, tubing) don't need to be replaced regularly as long as intact. SOME brands of pumps have some valves or filters that may need replacement if they wear out or get wet. Refer to the



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pump manufacturer's directions or website. All should also have Customer Help lines to trouble shoot any pump issues with you.

At the Office

Q: Any suggestions for maintaining some privacy while pumping in a cubicle?

NH: I am a fan of using the "Baby au Lait" or another nursing cover up when pumping at your desk. Just like when nursing, most people may know what's happening under there, but they will not be able to see anything so you'll feel confident knowing you are completely covered. Also, if your pump is a noisier model, wrapping a towel over it can significantly muffle the sound.

Q: What should you do if you forget your pump at home or it stops working that day at work?

NH: If you've been breastfeeding and pumping regularly up until that point, you'll be full and uncomfortable after five or six hours. It's certainly helpful to learn how to manually express (removing milk using your hands only). If you do forget, you may need to make arrangements to run home or take a half-day. It might help to make a checklist for work that includes your pump, all your pump parts, storage bags/bottles and extra batteries or a power cord so you won't get caught missing something important when you need to express during the workday.

Q: I have to do frequent 1 or 2 day business trips. What's the best way to transport breast milk when I travel if I won't have access to a freezer for 3-5 hours?

NH: I suggest you get a cooler bag (bigger than the little one that often comes with pumps) - get the kind that would hold a 12-pack, keep about 3 frozen water bottles in there for your cold source (you can drink them as they slowly melt during the day) and it will keep your milk (and pump parts!) cold during your work day and the commute. You'll need to bring six bottles and caps, to double pump three times during the workday. You can also pump into milk storage bags, or pool expressed milk into 1 liter water bottles if you prefer.

Organized Mom: I traveled several times while breastfeeding. I started out using the ice pack that came with my pump but if I didn't have a fresh ice pack, I would use bags filled with ice. Depending on where you are traveling, you can find ice in lots of places - like asking the local coffee shop for a cup of ice or accessing the ice machine at your hotel. Often even when I was at the office, I stored my milk with my ice pack. There are guidelines on how long breastmilk can be stored in various settings on Kellymom.com.

Q: What about low wage/ hourly workers that don't have unlimited time to pump.



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NH: With experience and practice, pumping should take about 15-20 minutes. It's true and unfortunate that for a variety of reasons women may have difficulty finding either the time or the location to express milk regularly at work. Pumping at least once (lunchtime) and then pumping at the end of the work day, once "off shift" may help, as may expressing in the morning before starting work. The federal legislation is helpful in laying out the language and requirements for the employer, but it is not particularly enforceable.

Q: What is your advice for low income parents? What special considerations might they have to deal with such as cost of breast pumps, feeling unable to advocate for themselves due to fears of losing their jobs etc.?

NH: Explore resources like insurance company support for breastpumps and lactation consultation. WIC provides pumps and breastfeeding education as well.

Bottles

Q: My baby took an intermittent bottle for weeks 2-5 but now at 3 months, she won't take a bottle. Suggestions on how to get her back on the bottle?

NH: I cover the Breastfeeding Baby who Refuses the Bottle, midway into my "Bottle Feeding the breastfed baby webinar.

Weaning

Q: What's the best way to transition and stop breastfeeding? What age do you recommend stopping breastfeeding?

NH: The official recommendation and mine as well, is to nurse for the first full year and beyond if desired by mother and child. However, any amount of breastmilk is beneficial - and is dose dependant. Some is better than none, and more is better than some. You need to determine what works for you and your family. Take it week by week, no need to decide at the beginning what your long term plans are.



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If your question has not been answered here, please reach out to fellow parents via the [Bright Horizons Online Community](#).

