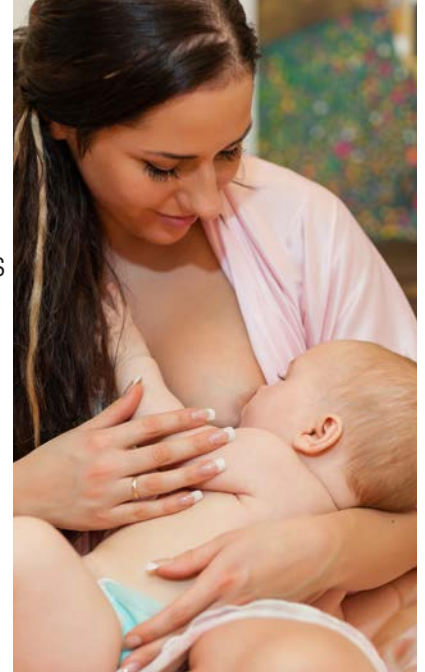




THE BOTTOM LINE *on Breastfeeding*

Build Your Network of Supporters

Breastfeeding is one of the best decisions you can make for the health and well-being of your baby and yourself. Unfortunately, breastfeeding mothers often find their greatest challenge to be dealing with their relatives and friends – those same people who should be their biggest supporters! Sometimes the people closest to you can be the most difficult to handle. Building your network of positive supporters before the baby even arrives will help. Start by making sure your network is educated about breastfeeding. Have them attend a breastfeeding class or support group with you. Share some breastfeeding books, magazine articles, and *The Breastfeeding Journal*. Invite them to go to a doctor's visit with you. Your health care provider will be happy to tell them about the benefits of breastfeeding. Key members of your support network could be your partner, parents, siblings, friends, La Leche League, new mother groups, WIC, and of course your health care providers.



Ways your network can support you:



Be positive! Learning to breastfeed will take time. Hearing lots of encouragement, praise and reassurance will help.



Feed mom. There is nothing more frustrating than being hungry and not having the time or energy to fix something to eat. Set up a schedule where friends and relatives take turns bringing food. Meals for the freezer that can be easily reheated are a big plus!



Take over household chores. Cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping and other everyday jobs won't get done by themselves. Your support network should be prepared to pitch in and help.



Protect your privacy. Sometimes mom, dad and baby just need some time alone. Having relatives and friends understand this before the baby even arrives will help the days after birth run more smoothly.



Help with problems. If you are having trouble, don't continue to struggle by yourself. Reach out to a breastfeeding specialist and ask for help.