

WHY NOT BREASTFEEDING WAS NEVER AN OPTION

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If you're a mom or going to be a mom in the near future, you've heard enough and more about the amazing advantages of breastfeeding. And if you're fortunate like me you've been forewarned about the difficulties that may arise and how it's not really the most natural experience that you always thought it was.

What with incorrect latching, sore nipples, engorged breasts, plugged milk ducts, and 10 additional terms in the same vein? You'd actually think it's a new phenomenon that women today are plagued with and it never existed before today.

I've spoken to a lot of new mothers lately (who else?). In many cases the story is the same. Mom starts off thinking she will breastfeed. The babe cries (incidentally that's what babies do) the grand mother, the maid, the husband panic, the mom panics, the baby is given top feed. The mom is told she is not producing enough milk. She keeps giving top feed and then the vicious circle continues.

The mom really does not make that much milk eventually and starts supplementing more and more with formula till she ultimately stops nursing far too early. She tells other moms that she didn't produce enough milk. New moms believe her and when their baby cries they too think they aren't making enough milk. Not stopping to think, that they will produce milk, they have no reason not to.

Even though today every where you look, breast feeding is touted as the best thing you can do for your baby, surprisingly a lot women look at it as something they will try out and if it doesn't work well for them, formula is not such a bad thing after all.

At most hospitals (like Breach Candy hospital in Mumbai), the nurses are trained at institutes where the courses are outdated and very conventional in their outlook. Therefore when the 24-hour-old baby cries, they are quick to offer a bottle of formula citing hunger as the reason. A novice mother will do anything to pacify the helpless little miracle in her arms and agree, and this is where the problems begin.

When N was about two weeks of age, he began crying for a little while every evening on and off. This is fairly common in babies from 2 weeks to about 10 - 12 weeks. A lot of people told me he gets hungry in the evening and I even got myself a box of commercial formula (Nestle – Nan one - which I need to toss out now 7 months later), which I gave him once. Once I read the ingredients on the box (soybean oil and corn oil for starters) I knew I could not give him that. Apart from the obvious reasons, giving my baby something out of a box was a definite no no.

When I went for N's 15-day check up, he had gained a good amount of weight and was peeing and pooping really well. And why won't he be eating sufficiently well? I am a healthy mother am I not? There is no reason for me not to make enough milk. None at all!

My personal reasons for not considering any alternative to breastfeeding:

- 1) **Breast milk is real food** and not chemicals put together in a package.

- 2) **Breast milk has a much higher fat content than formula.** The brain is made largely of fat and the majority of the fat in the brain is saturated. The Myelin Sheath that surrounds the nerves in the brain and ensures their proper function is also largely made of saturated fat and cholesterol. Breast milk contains much more saturated fat than cows milk or commercial formula and is of utmost importance for a growing brain.
- 3) **Breast milk has lauric acid:** which protects infants from viruses and bacteria and protects the immune system.
- 4) **Immunity:** Prolonged breastfeeding really does boost the immune system. I have good immunity and passing it on to my baby is really, really important to me. So far not a sniffle has he had.
- 5) **The cuddly time outs:** Never again will I be able to put my feet up for a few minutes every few hours and inhale my little one. The slowing down of life is really a luxury I will never give up. In todays hustle bustle when again will any of us get this sort of time to spend with each other?
- 6) **[Evolutionary Tinted Glasses](#)** : Human babies (and all mammals) are meant to be breast fed. Who wants to argue with nature?

Having said that breastfeeding is the hardest thing a woman of today has to do. Even if **IF** you do by some stroke of luck (and a lot of research) get off to a good start initially the amount of hours spent glued to a chair with a baby gnawing on you is enough to make you want to pull out your hair. The first few weeks (two months or so) are probably the most testing times in most women's life (when the world is going by and you've vegetated). It's enough to make a lot of women give up.

But a few months of your life is a lifetime of rewards for your baby!

Getting off to a good start immediately after the baby is born is very important though. **Do whatever it takes to start trying to establish a latch soon after the baby is born!** I cannot stress that enough, and I think it's important to mention here.

There are moms out there who after their best efforts have not been able to breastfeed. My heart goes out to them. Again working women really do not have much of a choice after the first few months.

Are you less of a mother if you don't breastfeed? I suppose it depends on the individual. But I do know it would have broken my heart, and made me feel like an inadequate mom. Having said that, I realize there are some circumstances that make it very difficult.

Am I proud that my baby is 100% breast fed? Ummm, clearly!

[Here's a mom](#) who's been an inspiration for me, and a lot of fit moms, who really went to great lengths to establish breastfeeding.

[Here's another](#) story closer to home.

Must read: [Moms nutrition for breastfeeding](#). **Breast milk is the best food for baby, provided that the mom's diet is rich in nutrients!**

Thanks for reading! I would really love comments!

