

Senseless Weaning

I WANT TO STOP NURSING MY CHILD BECAUSE I WANT TO GET PREGNANT.

While breastfeeding can be used to help you space your children 2 years apart, many moms do conceive while still nursing. When you're ready to become pregnant just start trying. You can nurse while pregnant. There is no evidence that nursing while pregnant causes any problems for your developing child. Eat well and take your prenatal vitamins. Good luck!

I'M GOING TO STOP BECAUSE MY CHILD HAS TEETH OR HAS BIT ME!

Every relationship has its difficulties and obstacles. The presence of teeth do not necessarily cause discomfort and but some children (not all) do bite while nursing especially when teething. Continue to nurse your child as if he or she doesn't have teeth, if you experience any discomfort work on a deeper latch-on and/or change positions more frequently. You can also tell your child that he or she is causing some discomfort and to open his or her mouth wider while you attempt a deeper latch-on. If your child bites, end the feeding immediately and offer a substitute. Most children stop the biting behavior quite quickly. See the "Teething Handout". Just because a child bites doesn't mean you can't enjoy many more months of nursing. If your child bit your arm would you stop holding your child? Of course not, it's too important to hold and hug your baby. In just the same way, the breastfeeding relationship is too valuable to end because of this minor difficulty.

MY CHILD IS ONLY NURSING ONCE A DAY AND I DIDN'T THINK IT DID MY BABY MUCH GOOD!

Every single drop of breastmilk is more precious than gold. Each drop is packed full of nutrients and cells that fight illness. Your body actually concentrates these nutrients when mom is nursing less. This is one time you can get more for less. Don't forget each teaspoon can have as many as 20,000 thousand white blood cells. And what about the bonding and nurturing that occurs when you nurse? This can NEVER be replaced by a rubber or plastic nipple.

I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH MILK AND MY BREASTS HURT WHEN I MISSED ONE FEEDING!

How can that be if you don't have enough milk? It doesn't make sense that you get engorged when a feeding is delayed a few hours. This mom didn't know about growth spurts and that breastfeeding gets easier after the 5-6 week growth spurt.

MY MILK SUPPLY WAS DROPPING.

If your baby is under 6 months, then it is important for you to rest, drink adequate fluids and take your baby to bed with you and nurse frequently. If working, take a few days off to do this. When able, another strategy is to pump your breasts after feeding for 5 - 20 minutes. The emptier your breasts the faster they make milk. Or let baby nurse for as long as possible. Discontinue the pacifier and allow baby to use your breasts for this type of sucking also (as nature intended). Consider using herbs or medications to help increase your supply. Many herbs are used to increase supply and a lactation consultant can suggest herbs and a health care provider for prescription medications. If you are only partially nursing listen to your baby, keep nursing and make up the difference with formula as long as baby is not actively refusing the breast. Some babies are content and happy to get whatever milk you have. You can certainly employ some or all the above methods to increase your supply depending on your motivation. As long as you and/or your baby are enjoying this relationship. DON'T STOP. Every nursing is valuable. Every drop is valuable. If your baby is well established on solids, a decreased milk supply is just not a concern baby will make up calories on solid foods. You certainly can increase your supply by employing the above measures. Again, as long as you and/or your baby are enjoying this relationship, DON'T STOP! Every nursing is valuable. Every drop is valuable.

I'M GOING BACK TO WORK.

Nursing and breastfeeding takes planning, preparation, and dedication but it can be done. Pumping to fully nurse your child need only occur until the ninth month. Attempt to pump at least twice in an 8 hour day until solids are a significant source of food. If you can't pump that long you have other options. One option is to breastfeed at least twice a day and supplement with artificial milk and/or solids if child is over 4 months of age. Another option is to night nurse-some moms nurse the baby all night long and therefore the baby doesn't need much milk or none at all while mom is at work. Some moms can make arrangements to see their child during the day. They either have someone bring the baby in or go to the baby. See the working and breastfeeding handout.

I'M NOT ENJOYING NURSING MY 3 WEEK OLD.

This is quite common, so you are not alone. Think about all the reasons why you decided to nurse your baby. Look at your baby. Isn't he or she worth the extra effort? Now, think about the care of the newborn. It consists of changing diapers, doing laundry, listening and trying to figure out why the baby is crying, nighttime feedings, lots of rocking and cradling and you can't get anything done. But you know all this is going to get better and better. One day your baby will tell you his or her ear hurts and he or she will be potty trained and your baby will crawl and walk. The routine of breastfeeding at this age is no different-it is consistent with all the other time-intensive newborn activities. Someday, if you are patient, some day your baby may be nursing as little as once a month and they will ask by cuddling up in your lap and using your special word to communicate his or her need to bond and nurse with you. The difference between the other newborn activities and breastfeeding is that most moms realize that its NOT OK to stop changing the baby or stop going to the baby at night to see why the baby is crying. Unfortunately, they don't realize its NOT OK to stop nursing. And because moms don't have any control over when the baby wakes up or poops and they do have control over whether or not they offer their breasts or a bottle, some regrettably choose to prematurely wean. Only to find out that weaning doesn't make it better- it makes it worse. The baby must still be fed and now they have to get up out of bed in the middle of the night, fix and warm a bottle, then they have to sit up to feed the baby until the baby is done and now they also feel guilty. Or the have a sick crying baby. Fact is you'd be better off not changing the baby's diaper. By the way, if you still make this choice and find out that premature weaning really did not fix things, you can re-lactate or restart your milk. Really we can get mothers who have not even been pregnant to make milk.

I'M NOT ENJOYING NURSING MY 6 MONTH OLD.

Some moms continue to feel tied-down by nursing until they introduce solids and the baby's feedings drop down to 4-6 per day. Again, be patient. In another month or so you will be nursing a lot less and the breastfeeding relationship changes in character. It becomes more of a bonding experience and you have more freedom. Prematurely weaning at this age is like climbing a mountain almost reaching the top and refusing to look at the view. The second six months of nursing are really enjoyable. Consider that the second six months will definitely be more enjoyable if your child remains healthy-stop nursing and your child has fewer defenses against whatever germs he or she comes in contact with. In fact, many moms find that their child becomes ill for the first time once they begin weaning by introducing solids around six months. If the need to have your body back to yourself is still overpowering then at least consider partially weaning and have the best of both worlds. Or if you quit and it doesn't get better, you can re-lactate.

I THINK MY BABY DOES BETTER ON ARTIFICIAL MILK.

How could that possibly be if we know that human milk is far superior to artificial milk? The only baby that will do better on artificial milk is one with certain medical problems that require specialized infant formulas or the mother is undergoing chemotherapy. All other breastfeeding moms and babies do better if they are nursing. How can you or your baby be doing better if the baby is sick or if you develop cancer. If your baby has colic they are not allergic to your milk but they can be allergic to certain foods in your diet. We can

remove these foods and/or put you on special food enzymes to break the food proteins into smaller molecules. Sometimes, its not the milk but the way the baby is being fed. See Dr. Newman's handout on colic. Again breastfeeding is a relationship it requires work and commitment. Some relationships are easier than others whether it's breastfeeding or a friendship or a marriage. This is an immensely valuable relationship~ it deserves your full attention.

MY BREASTS LEAKED ALL OVER THE PLACE.

This is a sign of a good milk supply. This resolves itself once you and the baby get more efficient at making and sucking milk. Usually around the third month, your breasts become very efficient at making milk and feel less full. Wearing light colored clothing with a design will hide any inadvertent leakage. After a certain period of time most moms won't leak unless they miss a feeding and the breast is especially full. Many moms swear by a newer product called "Lily Padz." Available at: www.simplylily.com .

MY BABY'S WEIGHT WAS LOWER ON THE GROWTH CHART.

The growth charts we use to measure growth and development are based on studies of artificially fed babies, who are fatter. They are invalid with respect to weight for breastfed babies. Breastfed baby's weights are usually less than bottle-fed but their height is usually about the same. Newer charts based upon exclusively breastfed infants are now the standard. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/who_charts.htm

MY 6 MONTH OLD BABY WAS EASILY DISTRACTED AND LOOKED AROUND WHILE NURSING.

This is quite common in this age group. Try nursing in a quiet darkened room. Baby may be naturally less interested in nursing because baby is growing up. Some just get really efficient and can drink over 2 ounces in less than 5 minutes. Just continue to nurse. Stop using the bottle and offer pumped breastmilk or other fluids by cup only to encourage increased interest in nursing. If using a pacifier, minimize or eliminate it. If your supply starts to decrease this is not worrisome since studies show baby will make up the calories by eating more. But if the baby is frustrated at the breast start the herb fenugreek and call a lactation consultant for the dosage and other recommendations.

EVERYONE IS SURPRISED I'M STILL NURSING MY 3 MONTH, 1 YEAR, 2 YEAR OLD!
CONGRATULATIONS, ARE YOU LIKE MOST MOMS, STILL ENJOYING NURSING? THEN WHAT DOES IT MATTER WHAT THEY THINK? LISTEN TO YOU MOTHERLY INSTINCTS, LISTEN TO YOUR BABY AND NURSE YOUR BABY AS LONG AS YOU BOTH LIKE. OR HECK, JUST TELL THEM THAT YOU ARE WEEEANING~~ SLOOOWLY!!!