A DAD’S GUIDE TO BREASTFEEDING
(MEN NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IT TOO!)
How you and your partner choose to feed your baby is a really important decision.

Breast milk contains the perfect blend of nutrients for your baby. Scientific evidence has repeatedly shown that breastfed babies grow up fitter and stronger than those who are bottle fed.

This leaflet, produced specifically for men, contains the facts about breastfeeding and how you can support your partner.
BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING

HAPPY HEALTHY BABY!
Breastfeeding is good for the whole family! Mums and babies are usually healthier and it saves lots of money and hassle:

**HEALTHIER:**
Formula fed babies are more likely to become overweight or obese, have more ear, chest and urine infections, more stomach bugs and higher rates of diabetes, asthma and eczema.

**LESS HASSLE:**
No need for bottles, sterilisers, or to boil kettles in the middle of the night...breast milk is good to go at any time.

**ON DEMAND:**
Breast milk never runs out and the more often your baby feeds, the more your partner makes.

**MONEY SAVING:**
The cost of formula milk, bottles and sterilising equipment could be more than £600 a year.

**HEALTHIER, HAPPIER MUM:**
Women who do not breastfeed are more likely to develop breast and ovarian cancer, diabetes, weak bones in later life, and depression. Breastfeeding enhances mother-child bonding, helps the uterus return to normal size after birth and may help with weight loss.
YOUR SUPPORT IS IMPORTANT!
For many women, their partner is their main source of support with breastfeeding.

Many breastfeeding women give up sooner than they want to. You can be integral in keeping breastfeeding going.

The more supportive you are, the longer your partner is likely to breastfeed and the more confident she’ll feel.

While breastfeeding is a natural process, it is also a learned skill. Breastfeeding isn’t always easy at first and can take a few weeks for both mum and baby to get used to.

Some breastfeeding mums go through a rough patch, but good support and encouragement from you can help her get through it.
HOW CAN YOU HELP?

YOU CAN'T DO THIS BUT...
Make sure your partner is comfortable while breastfeeding. Help her check the baby’s positioning and latch-on during breastfeeding (see tips below) and offer to adjust any cushions etc.

- While she is breastfeeding, bring your partner a drink, snack, pillow or footstool.

- Take on more of the housework yourself or get help, particularly in the early weeks. Make sure there is plenty of food in the house by doing the grocery shopping and cooking nourishing meals.

- Feeding mum is feeding baby – often babies feed a lot in the evening and this is a great opportunity for you to cook a meal for you and your partner.

- If you have older children, spend time with them so your partner can spend time with your baby or catch up on sleep.

- If your partner is considering stopping breastfeeding early on, encourage her to keep going by being positive and praising the progress she’s made so far. Providing reassurance, particularly when she’s tired or frustrated, will help boost her confidence.

- Too many visitors in the first two weeks can be exhausting.

- Get specialist help if your partner is experiencing difficulties with breastfeeding. Keep a list of phone numbers handy so you can easily call your local health visitor, breastfeeding counsellor, midwife, or GP.
USEFUL THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT BREASTFEEDING
• For the first six months, babies should be exclusively breastfed.

• Breastfed babies usually feed frequently in the early weeks, especially during the evenings.

• Every mother’s milk is tailor-made for her own baby.

• It contains many ingredients that help a baby stay healthy, such as antibodies to fight germs, hormones and factors that help your baby’s development.

• As long as your partner has a sensible, balanced diet, there’s nothing she has to avoid eating or drinking altogether. The occasional drink is unlikely to do your baby any harm.

• From about six months, you can start introducing a range of ‘solid’ foods as well.
ATTACHING BABY TO BREAST
• Nipple soreness or pain during feeding is a sign that the baby is not latching onto the breast properly. The baby needs to open his mouth really wide and have his chin against his mother’s breast to feed well.

• Many women experience difficulties when the baby is not latched onto the breast properly, however very few women are unable to breastfeed.
Talk to your partner so that you can agree how to handle it. Many men who feel like this before their baby is born change their minds later when they are used to seeing breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding can be done without anyone noticing. Your partner can use a blanket, scarf or shawl over the baby and her shoulder to cover the baby’s head and her breast.

Many places welcome breastfeeding and provide facilities for mothers to feed in private if they prefer. In restaurants or shops, don’t be afraid to ask if there is a quieter area available. If outside, try to find an unpopulated area, preferably with a bench or seat.

Your baby is feeding a lot and appears content after most feeds.

They are healthy and gaining weight after the first two weeks.

After the first few days, your baby should have about six wet and two dirty nappies a day.
Babies have a natural sucking reflex, but some need help to attach well to the breast and suck strongly. Some may be very small (e.g. born prematurely) or unwell at birth and unable to go to the breast straight away.

- Specialist help is available from midwives and health visitors.
- Try expressing a little breast milk for the baby to taste as the baby tries to attach.
- If your baby is very sleepy, try to wake him by unwrapping and undressing him, and playing with his toes or hands.
- If your baby won’t take one breast, try the other one!

This will depend on the age of your baby.

- In the first few weeks ask for specialist help.
- Don’t wait for baby to cry for food.
- Skin to skin contact from you or your partner can help.
• No! Breastfeeding can be done anywhere. Babies can be taken out without any of the hassle of having to boil water, sterilise bottles or carry enough formula.

• If your baby needs to be left at home without mum, breast milk can be expressed and stored in the fridge or freezer and either you or a carer can feed the baby.

• Yes

• If concerned, take advice from a doctor or health visitor.

• Most medications are fine to take when breastfeeding but check with your health professional.

• The most important thing is to keep on feeding the baby, or expressing milk, to keep the milk supply going.
It can take a while to return to normal sexual activity, no matter how the baby is fed. Soreness, tiredness and lack of time are common problems. However, you and your partner can enjoy an active sex life while breastfeeding.

- Because of hormone changes, some women experience vaginal dryness during breastfeeding. Using a lubricating gel can help overcome this and make intercourse more comfortable.

- Breasts can leak milk when they’re stimulated. Don’t be phased by this and keep a soft towel handy.

- Your partner may feel self-conscious about her body after giving birth. Help her feel loved and attractive again by giving her lots of attention and reassurance.

- Breastfeeding is sometimes used as a method of contraception, as it delays the return of a woman’s periods. However, it is not reliable, so if you definitely don’t want to have another baby just yet, it’s best to use other forms of contraception while breastfeeding.
After the first few weeks when breastfeeding is going well, your partner might want to express milk. Milk can be expressed by hand or by a pump. Use a sterilised container for the milk. You can store milk in the fridge at a temperature of between 2°C and 4°C for up to five days, or in the freezer for up to six months.

Expressing is not an essential part of breastfeeding but some mothers find it useful.
With breastfeeding, parents do have different roles to play. While it helps to develop a strong bond between mum and baby, dads can sometimes feel jealous or left out. Try to remember that breastfeeding is just one aspect of caring for your baby.

There are plenty of other ways to care for and be close to your baby.

- Cuddle, bathe, massage, rock and lie with your baby on your bare chest – babies love skin-to-skin contact.

- Get to know your baby (and help them get to know you) by talking, singing and playing games.

- Get involved before and after breastfeeding – you can bring baby to mum, change their nappy, get their wind up and rock them to sleep.

- You can also read stories, go for walks with baby in the pram or in a sling to give your partner some time to herself.

The more you get involved with caring for your baby, the more quickly you’ll develop a strong bond. Babies often love the sound of their dad’s voice and the security of being held in their arms. Supporting your partner with breastfeeding is one of the most important things you will do for your child. Try to enjoy this time – it is busy and tiring but the rewards are amazing!
Shawl or scarf to use when feeding out and about.

Breast pads – reusable ones are cheaper and get better as you use them. You will need about 12 of these. Disposable ones are also widely available.

Savoy cabbage – their leaves can help with full breasts in the early days.

2 or 3 decent nursing bras (try them out – are they easy to open 1 handed?).

2 or 3 loose fitting tops to enable easy access when out and about.

Encourage partner to hand express.

Lots of treats for mum.

Baby sling.

A clean muslin can be used to cover baby and mum for extra privacy, then used for wiping little mouths and placed on the shoulder for winding afterwards.

Keep a list of key phone numbers handy so you can easily call your local midwife, health visitor, or breastfeeding counsellor for help.
Reference

Resources just for dads and dads to be
www.fatherhoodinstitute.org
www.who.int/features/factfiles/breastfeeding
http://www.dadcafe.co.uk/
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/
http://workingwithmen.org/

Suffolk Resources
https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/advice-services/children/breastfeeding
https://www.ecch.org/our-services/services/cf-health-visiting/