

## Breastfeeding-Related Comments (n=100) from Alaska PRAMS Mothers 2016-2018 Births

The last page of the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) survey says “Please use this space for any additional comments you would like to make about the health of mothers and babies in Alaska.” These are comments made by mothers who delivered their baby in 2016, 2017, or 2018. They have been sorted into alphabetized topic areas shown below in the Contents. A single overarching theme was selected for each comment. No comments appear twice even though one comment may cover several topic areas.

(A search of the back page comments was made for “breast”, “brest”, “nurs”, “fed”, “bf”, “nip”, “lact”, “formu”, “bottle”, “leche”, “milk”, “latch”, “bond”, “feed”, “pump”, and “food”.) Comments come from surveys completed by mail or over the phone. They are recorded exactly as written/spoken.

Contact Kathy Perham-Hester, Alaska PRAMS Coordinator, at 269-3447 for further info about PRAMS or these comments. See also <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/wcfh/Pages/mchepi/prams/>.

### Contents

BOTTLE FEEDING/ Formula/ Supplementation .....	2
BREASTFEEDING, in general .....	2
BREASTFEEDING, older siblings .....	3
CHALLENGES (Baby) .....	3
CHALLENGES (Hospital) .....	4
CHALLENGES (Physical) .....	5
CHALLENGES (Trauma-related) .....	7
DECIDING NOT TO BREASTFEED .....	8
DIET/ NUTRITION.....	8
DONATED MILK .....	8
DURATION of BREASTFEEDING .....	9
EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING .....	9
FEEDBACK ON CLASSES.....	9
LACTATION CONSULTANTS, Need for.....	10
LACTATION CONSULTANTS/ NURSES/ MIDWIVES, Praise for .....	10
MARIJUANA & BREASTFEEDING .....	11
PRESSURE TO BREASTFEED .....	11
PROMOTION.....	12

PUBLIC BREASTFEEDING .....	12
PUMPING.....	12
SMOKING & BREASTFEEDING .....	12
SUBSTANCE USE & BREASTFEEDING .....	12
SUPPORT TO BREASTFEEDING MOMS, General .....	12
SUPPORT TO BREASTFEEDING MOMS, Need for.....	13
MISCELLANEOUS .....	14

## BOTTLE FEEDING/ Formula/ Supplementation

Some of my answers of my deliver and after my deliver: she was very small so the formula was not in my plan but was necessary for health. Extended stay due to complications with C-section.

[Hospital name] treated us all very well and we were very happy with our experience. The <community> WIC office is very nice and helpful! [Baby's name] twin sister won't breastfeed and the checks WIC gives us for formula are a huge help. We are so thankful.

This was my 2nd baby (hence the short hospital stay). Formula in the hospital was for baby's low blood sugar. PCOS was diagnosed before my 1st child but I didn't seem to have any issues with it in between children.

There should be a push for Alaska hospitals to be "baby friendly". Formula should not be given freely after birth but only as a medical necessity.

I had [baby's name] 6 weeks early, so on recommendation of her Pediatrician she gets one bottle of formula a day to provide her with extra calcium and other nutrients. She sleeps on her stomach since she has learned to roll, she will automatically roll to her belly to sleep, and she was just moved out of our room to sleep into her room right next door. We sleep with our doors open and she has an owlet monitor on. I found myself not sleeping at all if she made the slightest peep. I can still hear her very well, but tend to sleep a tad better with her in the next room. Still getting up every 2 & 3 hours a night for feedings.

## BREASTFEEDING, in general

I've been breastfeeding both my boys since they've been born. From my expirience, my boys didn't get sick as easily as other infents who were on formula. Glad I can help. [smiley face]

My baby is fine thank god, yet do not eat food - breasted.

This is my third baby and I am a... nurse, so any questions regarding breastfeeding & personal health before & during pregnancy that appear as though my MD or RNs did not address, simply were not pertinent to me at the time. I received excellent prenatal & postpartum care both for myself and my baby.

breast feeding is really beneficial and i highly recommended it. i believe it can keep off and fight off common colds and help immune system

## BREASTFEEDING, older siblings

I had a 9 month old at the time I became pregnant with my most recent child. Was already breastfeeding and taking prenatals.

I have a 2 year old as well as my newborn. My oldest was 22 months when my second was born. He kept me active during my entire pregnancy, and was breastfeeding until I was 5 months along. He weaned himself at that point most likely because my milk changed. I will say that I was tired more often with my second and would nap when my son did. I never thought I could have children. My partner and I have been together for 17 years. I wouldn't change it for anything.

## CHALLENGES (Baby)

I got scheduled to get induced a little over 2 weeks before my due date. Only because my son was not very big due to my placenta not giving him the nutrition he was needing...He was only 5lbs 5oz and had trouble latching so he had to be fed through a medical tube with breast milk.

I feel your survey needs more questions concerning breast feeding/formula feeding. My baby was born at 35 3/7 and had Hypoglycemia which required the use of formula to increase blood sugars until my milk came in. But was then exclusively breast fed for the several months. I found it very frustrating to obtain this formula with a bottle & nipple from my nurse because they were a "baby friendly" hospital. I feel that fed babies are more important then breast fed only babies and more education should be given that formula is an okay source of food if needed. As a ... Nurse I find this new push for BF only babies to be frustrating especially when babies are being starved to obtain this goal. My own personal experience with lactation consultants at the hospital I delivered was terrible! I was seen by two different older women who were less than helpful in increasing my supply. I found it difficult not to rely on formula after my several horrifying visits with them. I hope in the future to see more control by doctors, etc as to what they can do/say to patients.

she did see 4 pediatricians and <baby> had a undiagnosed lip and tongue tie and had issues with breastfeeding and all doctors did not diagnose and you went online and found answer and went to ped. dentist and had it corrected- pediatricians need to be more aware and educated on this and help support breastfeeding - all doctors pushed formula

My experience as a new mom is new and exciting. I wish I had sought out all alternatives of feeding a newborn, rather than be set on breast feeding only. My baby girl was born as a 'tongue thruster.' I didn't know what that meant prior to her birth. This made breast feeding very difficult and stressful, for both of us. After trying and emotional two weeks. I broke down. Formula became the feeding option for her. Incredible guilt and depression soon followed. All of my friends who are mothers, as well as my support network and birth center prescribed to 'Breast is Best,' so why think of different alternatives? Alaska, I wish there was some support for formula option mothers. Sometimes, its more than a milk supply issue...

I had a very enjoyable, natural labor experience. Baby had jaundice after birth and took a state employee LC coming to the house for several weeks to get breastfeeding established. Baby had to get treated for thrush 2x in first 8 weeks.
My babies were born premature at 26w & 6d. They stayed in the NICU for 80 days. This is why there was no skin to skin after their birth and why they were fed more than just breastmilk at such a young age. It is also why the hospital gave us formula upon discharge. They mostly breastfeed, but do take extra calories w/formula. Their prematurity was caused by twin to twin transfusion syndrome, and not by any outside causes. TTTS also causes an enormous amount of amniotic fluid for the "recipient" twin, so my weight gain was that mostly. My twins are my 3rd and 4th babies, which my doctors knew, and so they tailored their teachings dependent on that, some with breastfeeding information.
[Name] my lactation nurse has been a huge support. My son has had food allergies, not able to drink my breast milk prior to changing my diet. My son was also not able to poop on his own for 3 months. He is now eating my breast milk & pooping on own for last two months.
I was not on WIC during my pregnancy but I am now and I noticed my baby got eczema after I started drinking the store bought cows milk. There was no questions related to that though.
Baby was born in a birth center. I received zero interventions (not even IV fluids). We were discharged 3 hrs after giving birth. Baby had intestinal surgery and spent 3 weeks in the NICU (IV fed and bottle fed). After meeting with a LC and getting tongue tied clipped he finally learned to breastfeed-woohoo!
My water broke @ 29w 5d, spent 15 days on bedrest. baby was born @ 31w 6d (8 weeks, 1 day early) was unable to breastfeed or hold baby right away. Hospital helped me pump to get milk and to this day we still have to pump it all and feed it through bottle. Baby spent 39 days in NICU before we could come home. No medical reason for water breaking so early. Hope this helps your study. Wish there was a way to know why things like that happen with a perfectly normal, low risk pregnancy.
My daughter was born with a rare form of jaundice and because we needed her to pee and poop out the bilirubin we introduced her to formula in the hospital. ...
<b>CHALLENGES (Hospital)</b>
I had a very poor experience at the [hospital name]. My stuff was stolen, the nurses wouldn't call me to breastfeed my baby when he woke like I had asked, and my baby was treated like a file on a cabinet rather than a person. As a mother this was extremely frustrating, and when I requested a transfer to [hospital name], they threatened that I would have to pay out of pocket for my son to take an ambulance 5 mins away.
Attempted unsuccessfully to breastfeed in hospital. Am hoping to work on it now that we are home.

The hospital nursing aides don't know how to use breast pumps. As admitted to me by the girl "teaching" me how to use it. She then dumped my pumped colostrum down the sink because my baby was sleeping and she didn't "know what to do with it." I didn't see a lactation consultant until much later.
no actually had baby over baby over the weekend so she didn't get to see a lactation specialist for a week. it would have been helpful if [Hospital Name] could have one on duty on weekends.
Stop controlling what mothers can and cant breastfeed there babys in the NICU!!
When I was in the hospital at [hospital name] they put the same judgement on me as the women from the villages. They even called child services because of my mj use and because I wanted to leave and bc my partner [has a mental health condition]. This is my 3rd child but I had to give up my first 2 because of financial reasons and because the needs of my first 2 children I wasn't able to help them the best. Now that I am financially stable and more experienced it is different. I think too many people jump into pregnancy when they aren't ready. I faced a lot of harassment at the hospital and they treated me like this was my first baby even though I told them it wasn't. There was no reason they should have made me stay but it was probably bc of things they dragged up in my past and bc of his 10oz weight loss which is normal for a bf baby. It shouldn't feel like you're in prison at the hospital. Parents who are experienced and are healthy and if the baby is healthy they should be able to leave. They came in every hour and he didn't get breastfed properly bc they kept interrupting. I didn't have any private time to bond with and breastfeeding. If I have another child I will probably go to a midwifery or to [hospital name] bc I feel like the first 7 days are the most important for bonding. .... That's part of the reason I wanted to make sure to do everything right. I think if people were trained better there would be a lot less cases of SIDS. There are not nearly enough resources for parents for training and education. Especially here in <community> There are not nearly enough birthing classes and they only do them 2-3 days a month. There need to be way more resources for parents...
Yes. I had an issue breastfeeding and the hospital gave baby a pacifier which made it worse
My birthing experience, at <hospital> ..., was completely and utterly terrible. Before my emergency c-section I was promised my baby would be handed to me in the recovery room immediately after the C-section operation. I was also promised my daughter wouldn't be fed any formula at any time. I was lied to about both promises. I didn't see her for more than an hour after she was born, in which time she had also been fed formula. They said they didn't bring her to me because they didn't have enough staff to do it. Also, they interrupted me breast feeding so many times, hourly, that my baby's glucose level dropped and she had to be admitted into the NICU at the hospital for five days. I still had the effects of preeclampsia on my body, so my feet/legs were badly swollen and I had to walk far to the NICU to visit/feed my baby and no staff offered to bring me there in a wheel chair. ... I also had many issues with my prenatal care ...which if never happened could have prevented problems like my preeclampsia or could have helped my daughter not to be born prematurely.
<b>CHALLENGES (Physical)</b>
Please include information on low supply in Breastfeeding materials-it's need & it happens & it's hard to handle with the huge push on "breast is best."

While breastfeeding is important in terms of nutritional benefit and even psychologically via connection between mother & child - there are other ways. I exclusively pump for our baby because of continuous latch issues. I'm a stay at home mom and pump 4-5 times a day to make sure my baby gets the benefits of breastmilk. I was only educated/pushed at times to breast feed. I feel if more drs./lactation specialist educated/supported moms who have a pump right away - the breastmilk fed babies stats would increase. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Women in rural and bush Alaska can face challenges in receiving care during and after pregnancy because resources seem to be focused on urban users. While some resources were provided at [Hospital name], it seemed as if they could be more effective by becoming less antiquated. For instance, I had some pain while breastfeeding. I did not find the lactation consultant at the hospital to be helpful and, in fact, she seemed oblivious to non-verbal cues such that we became more tired and stressed after her visits because she kept talking when we were no longer interested. I did manage to get a few websites out of her and these and these became my most effective resources. When I returned to my rural community, I continued to have pain for two weeks while breast feeding. While the hospital provided me a handout of resources, most of these focused on services provided in-person in <community> which were inaccessible to me. Again the most effective and helpful resources were on-line resources from Stanford & the La Leche League. I think that providing these on-line resources to Alaska women & even improving on them would be useful for rural & bush residents. I had wanted to attend an in person breastfeeding class if possible. But I did not live in <community> so this was not possible to arrange and would have required hardship & loss of income on my part. Also, I appreciate how the "Back to Sleep" campaign has reduced infant mortality. At the same time it seems like the advice is impractical and most new mothers eventually switch to having their babies sleep in bed with them in order to get any kind of quality sleep. A sleep deprived mother can become desperate & dangerous. While we started out with our baby in the sidecar, I was finally able to get some sleep when I moved my baby to the bed I used laying down. While keeping infants out of the bed is necessary for some at risk groups, I feel like people will all eventually move babies to the bed in order to get some sleep. The question is - should they be empowered with knowledge on how to mitigate risks when doing so in order to decrease risks for infant mortality? I appreciated the outreach from the Public health nurse in <community>. I was impressed by the packet sent out, the phone call, and home visit I received. Please continue this service for rural users.

for them to continue to try an breastfeed. I had to pump because I got really bad cracked nipples and I had to get my baby used to the bottle. Continue to pump

I received excellent care from all providers. I had a high risk pregnancy with complications and I was monitored quite regularly. I had to quit breastfeeding @ 11 weeks because I was hospitalized with acute pancreatitis (idiopathic). I feel the support post pregnancy from the specialists were not as thoughtful of my desire to continue breastfeeding as several tests tainted my milk.\* However, my health has improved since discontinuing breastfeeding although not completely resolved. \*I was prescribed several pain medications (opiates), I opted not to use any & used marijuana to help treat the chronic stomach pain.

I felt I had adequate prenatal and post natal care. Breast feeding was my biggest frustration with my child. I use a nipple shield and have been quite successful. <Place> provided great care.

After giving birth to my baby boy I was experiencing bad back pain that wouldn't go away. After couple of weeks of being in pain I went to see the doctor. They did couple of x-rays and bone density test and found out I've got very rare case of pregnancy induced osteoporosis. My bones became too fragile and I had about 6 compression fractures of my spine. My doctor told me to stop breastfeeding immediately and take calcium and vitamin D. Four weeks later after doing so I had another X-ray that showed no new fractures in my spine and now I'm feeling a lot better. Another bone density test is advised in 6 months to see the progress.

I understand the importance of breastfeeding, but being diagnosed with IGT I also understand the importance of a baby being fed and not starved in an effort to exclusively breastfeed. I think it is important for more mothers to have information to recognize an issue with breastfeeding if there is one.

## CHALLENGES (Trauma-related)

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience. Right now I am in good mental and physical health, and my daughter is happy and growing quickly. There are a few things about my birth experience I would like to share. At the beginning of my pregnancy I was seeing the midwives at <PLACE>. Everything was going smoothly until week #36 of my pregnancy, when they noted high blood pressure and protein in my urine and determined me to be in pre-hypertension. They were no longer able to provide care to me and I went to <PLACE> to see two ob/gyn doctors: [Drs' names] up until week # 41 I received care from these physicians. At the end of week #41, I was sent to <Hospital Name> to be induced. At first my induction went well. Then I found out the doctor I would be under the care of was neither of the doctors I had previously seen. This made me feel scared and nervous. I thought that it would be okay, because the doctor I would be seeing was the hospital midwife, Dr. [name]. Then, during a cervical check, she stripped my membranes without asking. This stranger, who I was suppose to trust with bringing my baby into the world, violated my trust almost immediately. It was an extra painful experience because it brought back feelings I had experienced at the rape my ex - did to me - six year ago. It was painful and traumatic for those feelings to resurface while I was trying to have a baby. Another day went by and I was in extreme pain. I told my nurses before hand that an epidural was not an option. They wanted to do a cervical check at the height of my painful contractions, and I told them lying down would make it worse and I wanted to keep working through my contractions. They told me that was not an options, that I needed to lie down so they could check me. Again feelings from my past assault surfaced. I felt that I had no choice but to get an epidural. It turned out that I was at 5cm. Halfway there I felt robbed of the natural birth experience I so badly wanted. The next morning I successfully gave birth. The rest of the day and following night was a whirl, but a few things stand out. I was unable to successfully breastfeed, because the lactation consultants and nurses gave me different instructions and I ended up just being stressed out and confused. One of the nurses - unfortunately, I don't remember her name made rude comments to me about getting an epidural, adding to the shame I felt at getting one. Two of the nurses gave me excellent care <names>. They were wonderful and helped me care for my baby. After I went home, I was still unable to breastfeed, and I ended up losing my milk supply. I was also still ashamed of getting an epidural. On top of that, my baby cried for hours at a time and no one could tell me. I spiralled into depression, I have bi-polar disorder, and I decided (after a month) to ask for help. I sought out a midwife from <PLACE>, as well as comfort from my family and friends. My psychiatrist prescribed me extra medication to help with the depression. Sometimes I still feel like a bad

mom. I couldn't have my daughter naturally, couldn't breastfeed her or give her my milk. And she cried so much. But now that asked for and received help, we are both thriving and bonding together. I do wish my experience was a little different, and I think some things at <Hospital name> need to be changed. Thank you for taking the time to read about my experience. I hope it helps future moms-to-be.

I don't know if anyone has been in the same situation as I was, having a car accident after my son. I wasn't able to breastfeed and it threw me into depression. I had postpartum depression. Maybe follow up with moms after an accident. I didn't hear from anyone. I wasn't able to breastfeed. It was an emotional issue for me.

## DECIDING NOT TO BREASTFEED

I was struggle with at breastfeed and didn't really want to breast feed from the beginning. He was born small, and the nurses spoke with her and explained to her that she didn't have to breastfeed the baby. And gave you relief because there was other options.

...There is no support for mothers who can't or choose not to breastfeed at the hospitals.

## DIET/ NUTRITION

I had my baby at home with the assistance of midwives from <Place>. I eliminated caffeinated products from my diet during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. My baby and I co-sleep within a twin sized bed. I often carry my baby in a front carrier on my body. She often takes at least one nap in it per day. ...

Nutrition is one of the key components to any healthy baby substantial evidence has shown that. lack of stress in my life added to the health of my baby. We put a lot of focus on my cortisol levels being low - relaxed happy and in a good mood. I ate a very highly nutritional diet consisted of bone broth, wild game, and organic foods. Stayed very hydrated and active-exercising daily up to the day of delivery. Grateful that State of Alaska allows to birth at home where I felt safe and had the perfect care for our family and our needs. I know this is not the same in other states.

Our daughter had trouble sleeping when she was born for the first 3 months. We learned we were not feeding her enough. Once we fed her enough she started sleeping through the night. Now w/this pregnancy my husband & I learned & we have fed our son any time he's hungry & he has slept thru the night since day 1!! He's an angel baby!!! I have CPT1. My daughter ... has also tested positive w/CPT1 so we will be testing our son @ his 6 mo apt/1 year & 1 ½ year if they all come back negative then he is good to go I believe! We will find out as soon as we can!

**Editor's note: For more on CPT1A in Alaska, see <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/wcfh/Pages/CPT1A-for-Parents-and-Caregivers-.aspx>**

## DONATED MILK

While he was in the NICU he had donated breast milk.



there needs to be more breast milk donation options in Alaska for women who want to exclusively breast feed or women who are overly producing and want to donate
it was a twin pregnancy and babies were in NICU- so some of the questions were specific to being in NICU- particularly not being in same room and pacifier and being fed formula- and donor breast milk was offered
My baby was born 6 weeks early and was given donor milk in the hospital. Due to the early delivery, my milk supply does not support my baby's needs and is supplemented with milk formula. I plan to pump and feed my baby the expressed milk as long as I can still produce it. I will be returning to work when my baby is four months old.
My experience may be a bit different than most. I live in <community> and I had twins, so [baby's name] long hospital stay was due to premature labor due to twin pregnancy. He was healthy other than needing to eat and grow. He was also unable to nurse right away and was given donor breastmilk for a few days. Also, the reason he was not in the room with me is because he was in the NICU. There were no questions that really addressed these health situations.
<b>DURATION of BREASTFEEDING</b>
I plan on breastfeeding me baby up to or past a year, if needed.
This is my first to breastfeed past a month or a week even. My baby is 3 months and still breastfeeding. She is doing well and growing. My other babies are ages 5-12 and they are a great help in watching and playing with the baby. Thanks to ... hospitals in everything and any support you do....I Love Alaska [Mom's Name]
Not every experience is the same but it is all worth it. Breastfeed as long as you can. It is important... Did not pump. Did not talk to me about healthy eating, exercise, or losing pregnancy weight gained because I am still breastfeeding offered later in breastfeeding....
<b>EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING</b>
I only took prescription medication at the very end of my pregnancy when I could no longer handle the pain of my daughter on my pelvic bone. I did everything all natural until I couldn't. I also strictly breast feed.
<b>FEEDBACK ON CLASSES</b>
I wish that there was a class to learn about what to expect for after childbirth- feeding - breastfeeding- all that is to be expected in the first 8 weeks for a newborn
We took the breast feeding class with the public health dept & it wasn't worth the time. The video about "Sacred Hour" after baby's birth was info I received from my midwife. The handouts were helpful, but I could've picked those up/got online w/o sitting hours in a class. I got more from a 30 min-1 hr visit w/a lactation nurse than I did in an entire breastfeeding class.

I was cared for in a military hospital as well as [Hospital Name]. I was able to take a multiples birth class & breastfeeding class at [Hospital Name].

## LACTATION CONSULTANTS, Need for

The lactation nurses should be able to see everybody

I would have liked to be visited by a lactation specialist during my hospital stay. I requested to see one when my child was born, but they never made it before my discharge.

At [Hospital Name] meals to delivering mothers and mothers who were nursing babies still in the hospital was very poor or non - existent. They also lack a lactation consultant.

## LACTATION CONSULTANTS/ NURSES/ MIDWIVES, Praise for

I feel the good health of my baby is largely due to: having a home birth with very experienced midwives, having the support of in-home visits from a lactation consultant, having a diet that's consisted solely of fruit, vegetables and meat for my newborn's digestive tract with breast milk, and educating myself about birth with movies on being "Pregnant in America." Books such as, "The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding," and, "The Thinking Woman's Guide to Childbirth." were very helpful for me on my journey. So were the movies, "Business of Being Born," and "Pregnant in America." Finally, I feel my exercise regimen prior to and during my pregnancy helped shaped a healthy baby.

The public health nurses in <community> are wonderful. They helped me successfully breast feed both of my children and offered advice and help about post partum anxiety. They're such a wonderful resource.

My baby was born at home with amazing midwives who helped & encouraged breastfeeding, who checked on me frequently for depression & made home visits. Involved, caring providers willing to help & be there makes all the difference [heart]

I had an amazing midwife who I could call or text any time. A beautiful home birth a natural and healthy baby boy. The only reason I had depression and anxiety was because I get very sick during my first 20 weeks of pregnancy (Hyperemesis Gravidrum (HG) I did experience some baby blues this baby but I believe it was because a mixture of life circumstances. -Family member with cancer. -Husband needed to go back to work right after. -Dark Alaska December. -Hormonal changes. My midwife called & texted checked on me even after my care was over. We made it through. Breastfeeding comes natural to me-no problems there. Drugs & alhcole are not a problem baby is healthy! I love studies thank you for doing the research. ...

Throughout my pregnancy I always felt my doctor & nurses provided expertise and a high level of support when needed. I especially appreciated the public health nurse that came to my house several times my daughter's first week to provide weight checks, support, resources & help with breast feeding struggles we had at the start.

i think breast feeding is very good and drs are good at educating new moms and at every appt the lactation spec cam in it was very nice the support.

Being pregnant is the most beautiful thing ever and breastfeeding is AWESOME! Thank you to all the doctors and nurses ... for every wonderful work they are doing especially the NICU nurses/Doctors for caring and every beautiful work you are doing, {Hospital name} you are AWESOME...

I & my baby had a lot of trouble learning to breastfeed. Without the support of [Name] (IBCLC in <community>) I do not think we would have been successful. Please fund more lactation consultants & have visits in the state! I almost gave up!

... I saw a midwife and delivered at a birth center. They supported my decisions, visited me in my home, nursed me through mastitis and gave me free/cheap alternatives to medical intervention. More women would benefit from knowing midwifery/Birth Centers are available and valid choices.

## MARIJUANA & BREASTFEEDING

It must be hard to listen to the answers of the questions sometimes. Maybe I shouldn't be telling you this but it would be helpful if there was more information on marijuana and breastfeeding. It is hard to find.

I baby wear, extended breastfeed, nurse on demand, co-sleep. Left the placenta attached and let it fall off naturally-Lotus birth (I know it's weird) I stopped smoking cannabis the last month and a half of my pregnancy b/c my body "told" me too and I didn't start again until my baby was 2 months old, then just did a little and made sure there were no adverse reactions. Thanks for not judging me.

.... I didn't find much discussion of postnatal/breastfeeding marijuana use in my care, but I also didn't pursue it as I don't use pot, but I wonder if there's a sense this is "safe" now, postnatal.

I used marijuana for the first five months of my pregnancy. After that I stopped. I did not tell my doctors I was smoking marijuana. And I am currently not smoking marijuana while breast feeding. I hope my input helps. ...

## PRESSURE TO BREASTFEED

I felt pressured to solely breastfeed, I was not producing enough milk by feeding naturally or pumping. I feel like my baby lost way too much weight (8 lbs, 11 oz - 7 lbs, 6 oz) trying to make breastfeeding work because of lactation consultants and nurses. I was later diagnosed with Insufficient Gland Tissue, I am upset no one thought to test or diagnose this before my baby lost so much weight and we went through so much stress and trauma. Horrible Experience! [sad face]

Breast milk is the best way to feed your baby, but I also feel that mothers should not feel ashamed if they have to use formula. The hospital made me feel terrible for wanting to give my baby one formula bottle so I could rest and recover. She also had trouble latching and was very hungry and I just wanted her to feel full and happy until I was rested and got the hang of breastfeeding.

## PROMOTION

In the medical field and thinks there's a problem with the way feeding options are promoted. Always been promoted as formula or breastmilk and she had to supplement and didn't know before that that was an option or how to do that. Also thinks that women should be sent to referred to physical therapy for things like muscle weakness and bladder prolapse.

## PUBLIC BREASTFEEDING

... There should be more comfortable/reasonable accommodations for breastfeeding mothers, who would like to be in public with their babies, but still desire privacy not full exposure. A decent bench in restrooms of public buildings (state) would be nice.

## PUMPING

no one told her how often she should pump and hard time to maintain a steady supply- the lactation specialist told her that she was pumping good but did not tell her that she should pump more often -no one verified with mom on how often she should pump

## SMOKING & BREASTFEEDING

My midwife ignorantly prescribed me Chantix for smoking after birth knowing I was breastfeeding. Upon my own research I discovered it may cause seizures & underdeveloped lungs.

## SUBSTANCE USE & BREASTFEEDING

I was drug & alcohol free, & breastfeeding while pregnant.

Pumped for a month or so. My baby did not stay in the same room with me in the hospital until last day. Baby was fed breast milk and formula every 3 hours. Doctor keeps canceling postpartum checkup so she gave up. Was on suboxone during the month before pregnancy.

I am currently prescribed methadone before and after pregnancy and I am continuing to breastfeed baby. Been a happy post pregnancy very satisfied with outcome and treatment help. Thanks [name]

Because [Hospital Name] made me supplement my baby now does not nurse they pushed me if they would have done their research babies born on methadone do not gain weight for the first week

## SUPPORT TO BREASTFEEDING MOMS, General

Just that I know a lot of, for the breastfeeding support, I've been with the same doctor's office for a while but, I know that other people aren't offered as much support with it unless they ask for it, but um, my doctor's office was great with it. Including my pediatrician's office.

Because this was my second child everyone treated me like I knew what I was doing which was nice except the breastfeeding part, wish I got more information before hand. At the hospital while in labor the nurse was treating me like all I wanted was drugs. She didn't believe that I was in pain with the contractions. I thought that was rude considering I don't like to take medicine

I've seen a lot of young, unprepared mothers. That can be overwhelming with being needed all the time & not ready emotionally. I wanted & planned for my kiddos & even them becoming a new mom was a big change. Never wanted anything else but I lean on a lot of friends, family & talk through breastfeeding issues & get support & offer it to other new moms. It helps when moms help each other & give honest feedback!

Everyone was really helpful at the hospital, gave a lot of resources about breastfeeding and help if I needed it.

## SUPPORT TO BREASTFEEDING MOMS, Need for

Hospital food could be so much better!! Snacks should also be provided for breastfeeding mothers [smiley face].

I wish there were more breastfeeding help and I wish they didn't charge for that. I wish they would come to your house. I went 2 to 3 times and I had to pay for it which is total bs, it doesn't matter what your income is, if they want you to be successful then they should have more resources for that. I will never go again because I'm not going to pay \$200 to see a lactation consultant. Go to the dr and get charged because we have good jobs.

I really appreciated the support of the clinic staff [name] w/ breastfeeding education and support post-partum w/ BOTH of my kids. It was an incredible resource that significantly improved the health of my children and my confidence as a mother. Well worth the funding. I think that the steps to support working mothers dealing w/ pumping breastmilk are great. That was by far the most difficult part of my experience w/ a newborn. It is still pretty isolating to be a new mother. More resources linking new mothers w/ similar interests would help to form support circles since many of us don't have family here. Would help w/ occasional child care needs & linking moms who need to occasionally share experience w/ other moms

Breastfeeding is really hard for me but it doesn't start until about 5 or 6 days in. Maybe if there was more talk about the pain and discomfort that may happen it might help. Not sure how to solve the problem but feeling like a failure a few weeks after birth is really tough.

Would love a 24/7 hotline in AK for breastfeeding support esp. helpful in first month when it was really hard. Would love language to be spouse not husband.

...women in <community> do not have access to affordable daycare and enough daycare facilities to provide the need for watching children under the age of five, there are not enough preschool spots for the population, there is also no head start in this community. We recently lost our full time public health nurse and office despite our community's activism to save it. The remaining resources in <community>..., do not have enough funding to bring in someone to do a breast feeding workshop. Our community does not have anyone that offers breast feeding support....Communities like <community name> are in great need of partnerships and funding from other communities and government resources. I am proud to be from <community> and I want to make my community better and to bring support to my home to make Alaska families stronger....

## MISCELLANEOUS

I had breast reduction so breastfeeding wasn't the same as maybe had I not had one.

I was prescribed hydrocodone after dental work, about two weeks after I gave birth, while breastfeeding. I was informed it was of course safe, but I wanted to add this info.

You should also consider the uses of oils & herbal teas effects on certain pregnancy & ability to breastfeed.

she has had 3 kids in 3 different states and Alaska has been the most helpful with breastfeeding for sure

This was my second pregnancy so some of the questions about if I was told/taught things were unnecessary as I already knew them. Like I did not need a whole lot of information about breastfeeding or needed to see a lactation consultant while in the hospital. Also, many things were not asked or tested because I went to the same clinic for care as with my first. They already knew my history, preferences, etc.

Tricare did mail me a breast pump, but I didn't get it @ the hospital. I had a wonderful birth @ the base hospital. ...

...Didn't breastfeed in the hospital, but tried and also pumped; Hospital gave baby a pacifier, but we provided it.