

c. The Father and Breastfeeding

MODULE 3

As the father of a breastfed baby, you are essential to the success of this experience. During the pregnancy, inquire about the advantages of breastfeeding for the baby, for your partner, and for your family. Share your concerns with your partner or anybody else near you. It could be a nurse or doctor for example. Have this discussion before the birth of the baby.



Here is how the father can contribute to the success of breastfeeding.

THE FATHER AND BREASTFEEDING	
What to do?	How?
Support your partner in her new role.	Remember that breastfeeding is a partnership between the mother and the baby. Give them time to adjust as the mother learns how to breastfeed. Be positive! Tell her that what she is doing for the baby is marvelous.
Encourage your partner with nice words and gestures.	Help your partner find a comfortable position to breastfeed. Bring her a snack or drink while she is breastfeeding. Play her favorite music to help her relax.
Be there.	If possible, take a few days off from work. You will need help and mutual support during the first days while getting acquainted with your baby.
Participate in the baby's care.	Bring the baby to the mother at feeding time and return it to its bed after feeding. Burp the baby. Babies enjoy being carried, rocked, and being spoken to.
Take over the housework.	Prepare the meals, clean the house, do the laundry, and grocery shopping. If you are not able to do so, find someone who can for a few days.
Remain near your partner when she nurses.	Sit near her. Lie next to her and stay with her during the night while she breastfeeds the baby. She will appreciate your presence.
Help your partner with the nursing techniques learned.	Remind her of the breastfeeding techniques you both learned in Module 4 entitled "Choosing to Breastfeed" or during the prenatal classes.
Comfort your baby during difficult times.	Place the baby on your bare chest his/her little ear against your heart. Your heartbeats and the up and down movements of your chest when you breathe usually put the baby to sleep. Remember that both the mother and the baby benefit from your comforting efforts.
Help your partner rest.	Limit the number of visitors during the first few days. The baby, mother, and family will benefit from these quiet moments together.
Discuss together.	Discuss sharing the parental leave. Speak about your concerns and find solutions together.

