

the emotional challenges of breastfeeding



one of the most common reasons why feeds take longer than expected. Second, try setting a fixed time for each feed, say, 30 minutes and stop after that time, even though you may think he wants to continue feeding beyond that.

3. I'M STRESSED BECAUSE MY OWN MOTHER INSISTS THAT FORMULA MILK IS BETTER. Grandmothers know best – or at least they think they do. And they can forget that the baby is not theirs. Your mother says this to you for a number of reasons.

First, she probably fed you on formula milk and therefore, assumes you should adopt this practice, too. And second, she worries that breastfeeding is too demanding for you.

Don't suffer in silence. You'll feel better once you explain to her that you intend to continue with breastfeeding no matter what she says because of the health benefits for your baby, and that she is inadvertently making you tense by her remarks.

5. I'M SO TIRED ALL THE TIME AND BREASTFEEDING IS JUST A FURTHER STRAIN. Most parents find the first year very tiring, and breastfeeding adds an additional strain because you have to be there all the time when your baby feeds.

To reduce the pressure on you, explain to your partner that you are over-tired and that in return for you having responsibility for breastfeeding, he could look after your baby so that you can nap in between feeding times. That's a fair distribution of labour.

In addition, try expressing milk so that your partner (or another reliable caregiver) can occasionally give your baby a feed. Although your baby might resist taking milk from a bottle while being held by someone else, he will adapt eventually.

5. I AM JEALOUS OF MY FRIENDS WHO BOTTLE-FEED THEIR BABIES BECAUSE THEY HAVE A MORE PREDICTABLE ROUTINE. While it is true that bottle-feeding is typically more structured into a routine than breastfeeding, there are plenty of bottle-feeding parents who experience stress, too.

Try to think positively. Remind yourself of all the health benefits that breastfeeding brings your baby, and enjoy the nurturing experiences that you have together.

Remember, too, that within the foreseeable future (depending on your plans to continue breastfeeding), your infant will be off the breast, and weaned onto solid food and drinks from a bottle or cup. This emotionally demanding phase as a parent will soon pass before you know it. **YP**

1. I'M WORRIED THAT MY BABY ISN'T GETTING ENOUGH MILK DURING A FEED. Every mother wants her baby to thrive, and the thought that he might not be getting enough nourishment through breastfeeding is a huge concern for many mums.

Have confidence in yourself and your baby. Your family doctor or health visitor will guide you on the rate of your baby's weight gain, and they will alert you to any potential health difficulties. In the meantime, take a positive perspective, and work on the assumption that breastfeeding is satisfactory for him. Try to relax during feeding, as that helps the milk flow. Your baby senses your tension and as a reaction, becomes tense himself, which in turn inhibits the feeding process.

2. I'M FED UP BECAUSE ONE FEED TAKES SO LONG THAT IT RUNS INTO THE NEXT. This particular situation is stressful because it can make you feel as though you are a feeding machine with no other role in life than to provide breast milk for your infant! Your self-esteem can drop as a result.

Fortunately, there are a number of useful strategies to consider. First, make sure that your baby stays awake during feeding and that he doesn't have sporadic naps; sleeping during feeding is