

HOW FATHERS AND PARTNERS CAN HELP WITH BREASTFEEDING

by Penny Simkin

Now that the baby has been born, she/he will need to breastfeed 8 to 18 times a day. As her partner you may feel like there is “*nothing*” you can do to help the mother. It may seem that breastfeeding means you have no role to play in feeding the baby. This is far from true. The following is a list of some of the things that fathers/partners can do. You will be amazed at how much you **can** do!

- Help the mother with the latch and positioning of the baby, especially in the sidelying position by propping her with pillows under her head, behind her back, and behind the baby.
- Hold the baby’s head in place for her. Sometimes it takes more than her two hands to position the baby.
- Until the mother needs no help, awaken with her when the baby needs to eat at night.
- Change diapers before or after the feeding or when the baby is ready to switch to the other breast.
- Emotionally support the mother during challenges with breastfeeding. Be loving and affectionate. She may cry sometimes. Both she and the baby need time to learn how to do this. Do not suggest that she stop breastfeeding.
- Take care of routine household chores (laundry, meal preparation, dishes, etc.).
- Help her be discreet while breastfeeding in public.
- Bring her plenty to drink. Breastfeeding makes her very thirsty.
- Bathe the baby. This can be a very special bonding time for you and your baby. Think about taking the baby into the tub or shower with you.
- Take naps with your baby. Lie on your back with your baby lying on your chest,. You both will love it.
- Dance and rock with your baby. Sing to her.
- Comfort and soothe your baby with words and touch. Your baby knows your voice and feels safe in your arms