

THINGS YOU DON'T NEED TO DO BECAUSE YOU ARE BREASTFEEDING

You don't need to prepare your breasts for breastfeeding. Attempts to improve breastfeeding outcomes by antenatal breast expression, toughening the nipple, or trying to improve inverted or flat nipples by using shells or stretching 'exercises' have all been shown to be of no value .

You don't need to restrict your normal diet in any way just because you are breastfeeding - whatever you enjoyed before you had your baby you can go on enjoying. Although 'old wives' tales' abound, if you think about it, whatever one culture says you shouldn't eat while breastfeeding, breastfeeding women in another culture eat every day! (Once your baby is born you do not need to avoid soft (unpasteurised) cheese any more.)

You don't need to 'eat for two' - just eat when you are hungry. It is now known that a woman's body becomes better at using food when she is breastfeeding, and she can make plenty of milk on far fewer calories than was thought in the past.

You don't need to drink 'on purpose' to make milk - just drink when you are thirsty. If you are short of fluid your urine will become more concentrated, that is all.

You don't need to give up alcohol altogether because you are breastfeeding. An occasional glass of wine will have no ill effect on either you or your baby. The same goes for tea and coffee.

You don't need to rest in order to make milk. Being a new mother is tiring, so rest if you want to and are able. On the other hand, if you want to go to your aerobics class while you are breastfeeding, go ahead - it will have no effect on your milk production.

You don't need to 'be relaxed' in order to breastfeed. If your baby is well attached he will get enough milk whatever your state of mind (or body). Breastfeeding is a learned skill - how many people are relaxed while they are learning something new?

You don't need to give your exclusively breastfed baby any other fluid - even in very hot weather. Your milk provides all the fluid (as well as all the food) that he needs.

You don't need to put any cream, lotion or spray on your nipples after you have breastfed your baby. You will not get sore if your baby is well attached (unless you have thrush) and if your baby is not well attached nothing will heal your nipple except improving the attachment.