

Top 6 Questions About Breastfeeding An Adopted Child



Breastfeeding an adopted child is seldom considered, simply because parents are largely unaware that it is even a possibility. It is not necessary for a mother to have been pregnant to breastfeed, and if the right steps are taken, you may be able to enjoy a successful breastfeeding experience with your newest addition.

1. How Is Breastfeeding An Adopted Child Possible?

Being pregnant does help the breastfeeding process along since hormones including progesterone, estrogen and prolactin are released to help prepare the breasts to make breastmilk. These hormones enlarge milk ducts and alveoli which promotes the flow of milk.

But the hormone prolactin is not only released during pregnancy. The stimulation of the nipples can also release prolactin which can then lead to the secretion of milk.



2. What Are The Benefits Of Breastfeeding An Adopted Child?

Not only can adopted children benefit from the numerous health benefits of breastmilk, the skin-to-skin contact between a mother and her adopted baby during the feeding process is beneficial as well.

- Breastfeeding has a calming influence on your child
- Hormones oxytocin and prolactin are released, allowing mothers to feel more relaxed and at ease
- Mothers are able to comfort their child, which helps build trust and increase attachment

3. How Can I Start The Process?

The first step is to rent or purchase a hospital-grade electric pump. Start off by gently massaging your breast for a few minutes and then continue by placing the electric pump to the breast. Pump for eight to ten minutes at a time.

It is common for your nipples and possibly your breasts to feel tender or sore after the first few sessions. You can increase your comfort by making sure that the pump is not “pulling” too hard at the nipple and by lubricating the pump flange with a thin coating of oil (cooking oil will do).

Do not expect to begin producing milk overnight. It can take weeks for your body to begin producing milk, and even then you should not expect to be able to produce enough to sufficiently feed your baby.

4. Can I Take Medications To Help The Process Along?

There are some medications which a physician may prescribe to increase your chances of lactation and to boost your milk supply.

- Estrogen And Progesterone: These are used to imitate the same hormone levels you would have experienced during pregnancy. Typically you will only take these for a short period of time.



- Galactagogue: Meaning “a milk stimulating substance”, this may be prescribed after the body has been tricked into believing you have given birth once the above hormones are withdrawn.
- **Natural Options:** Mums who are not interested in prescription drugs or who want to try a herbal “galactagogue” may be interested in taking fenugreek, alfalfa and/or blessed thistle.
- Never take any medication – prescription or herbal – without the consent of your doctor.

5. How Can I Coax My Adopted Baby To Breastfeed?

When you first meet your adopted child, remember that you are a complete stranger to him or her. Introducing your baby to breastfeeding should be done gently and respectfully, though you will also need to be persistent in offering your bub the option.

Never force your baby to breastfeed. It is something which he or she should choose to do and feel comfortable doing. If you continue to experience difficulties, you can contact the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) for additional guidance and expert advice.

6. How Can I Breastfeed Without Producing Milk?

Many mums will not produce enough milk to sufficiently nourish their bub. But you can still breastfeed your child by using alternative feeding devices that promote skin-to-skin contact while ensuring your child is well-fed.

One system which is currently available is the **Medela Supplemental Nursing System (SNS)**. This system allows mums to feed premixed or concentrated formula through a pair of thin tubes which are attached at the areola with surgical tape (never use powdered formula as it may not be able to travel through the tubing). This allows your baby to nurse normally while receiving a mix of your breastmilk and formula.

Another system on the market is the Lact-Aid Nursing Trainer. This system functions similarly to the SNS, however it uses collapsible plastic bags rather than plastic bottles, making it easier for you to discreetly feed your baby.

The comfort of a mum and her baby is key to having a rewarding breastfeeding experience. Here at **Peachymama**, we offer breastfeeding attire featuring a panel system which allows a mum to breastfeed her baby with confidence.



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