

Brilliant Breastfeeding

A Sensible Guide



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Of all the highlights in family life, one of the most exciting and life-changing would have to be the birth or arrival of a new baby. First, second, third, planned or unplanned, it is a most significant time for parents.— Anonymous

Note from the author

At the time of writing, 'Brilliant Breastfeeding' offers up-to-date breastfeeding and parenting information gained from my many years of first-hand experience and on-the-job observations as a midwife, child health nurse and lactation consultant. However, you should not hesitate to contact a medical practitioner for additional advice, diagnosis or treatment regarding anything to do with a mother's or baby's health issue.

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Introduction

This book is all about making breastfeeding easy, trouble-free and enjoyable. It is factual, interesting, and evidenced-based, aiming to give both parents the very best information to make decisions about feeding their baby. It will help mothers and partners understand how breastfeeding works and how to manage challenges should they arise.

It is for anyone in any country who is expecting or is contemplating parenthood, and ideal for future grandparents to deepen their understanding of how they can support their childbearing family. It is perfect for new parents wanting to take control and enjoy their breastfeeding journey as well as for relatives and friends who can be wonderful supports when they have accurate information.

Worldwide, there is an increase in unnecessary medical interventions during labour and birth. Inductions, epidurals, and caesareans mean that many healthy women with healthy pregnancies do not experience birth naturally. The way baby enters the world can impact on breastfeeding. Considering birthing options and understanding the benefits of quiet skin-to-skin contact with baby as soon as possible after birth, are particularly valuable.

When natural birth is not an option for you, or when medical intervention is necessary, strategies are explained as to how you can maximise the opportunities for a positive start to breastfeeding your baby. This guide will provide practical and non-judgemental ideas to consider. After most birthing situations, encouraging baby's *breast crawl* to his first breastfeed is a beautiful, rewarding and useful experience. It can influence breastfeeding progress.

I write as a mother of three breastfed babies, and also as a Registered Nurse, Midwife, and Child Health Nurse. I have been an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) for almost 20 years and currently work privately in Adelaide and on Kangaroo Island in South Australia. Throughout my career, I have always been dedicated to helping mothers through a wide variety of difficulties to enjoy and reap the benefits of breastfeeding their babies.

I believe breastfeeding can be made easier with excellent preparation and support.

This is my second book. In 2011 my book called *On the Breast Handbook. Planning for Breastfeeding Success* was printed. It was a source of useful information that led many, mainly Australian mothers, to confident breastfeeding. All copies are sold. *Brilliant Breastfeeding* is an updated version of that book, written with a more global focus because although many women breastfeed with ease, I still see and hear of women all over the world ceasing to breastfeed within the first three months because of obstacles and confusion that could be avoided. It is for those that I am drawn

to write more, to expand, to clarify, to simplify and to further encourage and support.

Examining evidence and practical ways to establish breastfeeding successfully is valuable because it helps parents, future parents, and their health supporters to make more informed and confident decisions about the management of birth and feeding practices.

Because breastfeeding isn't always easy, I present all the everyday challenges that, in my experience, can upset breastfeeding goals. These will be tackled by giving you clear and helpful strategies to avoid altogether, to overcome, or seek appropriate help. There is rarely a *problem* that is unresolvable.

The information in this book will help you to have a beautiful start to feeding your new baby no matter how the baby is born. It will encourage you along the way to maintain your nursing relationship for as long as you choose. Weeks, months, years—any length of time spent breastfeeding your baby is valuable. My aim is for you to be empowered, feel confident and truly enjoy breastfeeding your baby or babies.

This book is organised in flowing chapters, starting at the important *before baby is born* time, moving gradually through birth and the first feed, the hospital time, and the early days and weeks. I then progress towards all the aspects that relate directly and indirectly to breastfeeding, as the months go by.

I like to think of 'parents' breastfeeding their baby. Of course, it is the baby who is breastfeeding; the mother breastfeeds her baby, but the father, partner, or other close carers, are of such

great importance in giving support, encouragement and love that breastfeeding ideally should be a team effort. And so it is, that sometimes I refer to 'parents' breastfeeding their baby.

Also, I refer to babies as 'he'. This is simply to differentiate between the 'she' of the mother. Not because I prefer boy babies!

Jo Gilpin

Chapter 1

The truth about breastfeeding and breastmilk Common myths

I believe that breastfeeding is one of the greatest long-term gifts a mother can give a baby and a baby can give a mother. It works both ways. The fact is, there is far more to breastfeeding than the simple transfer of milk.—Jo Gilpin, On the Breast Handbook. Planning for Breastfeeding Success, Hyde Park Press, 2011

If this is your first pregnancy and you are planning to breastfeed your baby, you may well question ... What is breastfeeding like? What does it feel like? How does it work? This book may answer some of your queries and help you to get a feeling as to what to expect. If it is your second or subsequent baby, you may want to do things differently; your goals may include aiming for a more extended obstacle-free breastfeeding journey. This information will support you to do just that.

How to describe breastfeeding?

Breastfeeding can be difficult to describe as it is a unique and personal experience between a mother and baby. Perhaps it needs to be experienced before one can fully attempt to express its qualities.

However, many mothers say that it is the firm connection that grows, especially when the breastfeeding relationship flourishes beyond 6 or 12 months, that is exceptionally beautiful and rewarding. Breastfeeding is sometimes easy and sometimes comes with challenges, but overall, it is often described as an absolute highlight of early parenting.