

# Finding Support and Information

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While breastfeeding is natural, you still may need some advice. There are many sources of support available for breastfeeding mothers. You can seek help from different types of health professionals, organizations, and members of your own family. Under the Affordable Care Act (health care reform), more and more women will have access to breastfeeding support without any out-of-pocket costs. And don't forget, friends who have successfully breastfed can be a great source of information and encouragement!

## Health Professionals Who Help with Breastfeeding

Pediatricians, obstetricians, and certified nurse-midwives can help you with breastfeeding. Other special breastfeeding professionals include:

- **International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC).** Lactation consultants are credentialed breastfeeding professionals with the highest level of knowledge and skill in breastfeeding support. IBCLCs are experienced in helping mothers to breastfeed comfortably by helping with positioning, latch, and a wide range of breastfeeding concerns. Many IBCLCs are also nurses, doctors, speech therapists, dietitians, or other kinds of health professionals. Ask your hospital or birthing center for the name of a lactation consultant who can help you. Or, you can go to <http://www.ilca.org> to find an IBCLC in your area.
- **Breastfeeding Peer Counselor or Educator.** A breastfeeding counselor can teach others about the benefits of breastfeeding and help women with basic breastfeeding challenges and questions. A “peer” means a person has breastfed her own baby and is available to help other mothers. Some breastfeeding educators have letters after their names like CLC (Certified Lactation Counselor) or CBE (Certified Breastfeeding Educator).

Educators have special breastfeeding training but not as much as IBCLCs. These professionals still can be quite helpful.

- **Doula (DOO-lah).** A doula is professionally trained and experienced in giving social support to birthing families during pregnancy, labor, and birth and at home during the first few days or weeks after birth. Doulas who are trained in breastfeeding can help you be more successful with breastfeeding after birth.

## Mother-to-Mother Support

Other breastfeeding mothers can be a great source of support. Mothers can share tips and offer one another encouragement. There are many ways you can connect with other breastfeeding mothers:

- Ask your health care provider or hospital staff to recommend a support group.



- Search your phone book or the Internet for a breastfeeding center near you. These centers may offer support groups.
- Find a local La Leche League support group by visiting the organization’s website at <http://www.llli.org/>.
- Search the Internet for breastfeeding message boards and chats. (These resources can be great for sharing tips, but do not rely on websites for medical advice – talk to your health care provider.)

Learn more about breastfeeding basics and find other online resources at <http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding>.

## WIC Program

Food, nutrition counseling, and access to health services are provided to low-income women, infants, and children under the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. This program is popularly known as WIC (Women, Infants, and Children). Breastfeeding mothers supported by WIC may receive educational materials, peer counselor support, an enhanced food package, breast pumps, and other supplies.

Breastfeeding mothers are also eligible to participate in WIC longer than non-breastfeeding mothers. To find contact information for your local WIC program, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/Breastfeeding/breastfeedingmainpage.htm> or call the national office at 703-305-2746.



## The National Breastfeeding Helpline

The National Breastfeeding Helpline from the Office on Women’s Health has trained breastfeeding peer counselors to provide support by phone. The counselors can help answer common breastfeeding questions. They can also help you decide if you need to see a doctor or lactation consultant. The Helpline is available for all breastfeeding mothers, partners, prospective parents, family members, and health professionals seeking to learn more about breastfeeding. The Helpline is open from Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., EST. If you call after hours, you will be able to leave a message, and a breastfeeding peer counselor will return your call on the next business day. Help is available in English or Spanish.

**Call 800-994-9662 for Support!**