

MOTHERS THROUGH SURROGACY OR ADOPTION CAN BREASTFEED!

Breastfeeding is the most natural way to feed a baby. It not only provides food, warmth and comfort but also nurtures a unique bond between the mother and the child. Intended mothers (having a baby through surrogacy) or mothers going for adoption can also offer the closeness, security and reassurance of breastfeeding to their baby.

You may be surprised to know that this is even possible! You may have a mixed reaction and may not be sure whether you really want it. Your family members may be sceptical. True, that intended or adoptive mothers do not have the hormones of pregnancy that cause milk production, to begin with. So, they definitely need a lot more information and support to make breastfeeding work, by the process of induced lactation.

Here are answers to some most frequently asked questions about breastfeeding without giving birth.

Why should I breastfeed my adopted baby/baby born via surrogacy?

Breast milk is baby's natural food. Along with perfect nutrition, it helps the baby's immune system to develop, promotes bonding, and has numerous health benefits for both the mom and the baby.

When can I start preparing myself for breastfeeding?

An intended mother can start getting ready to breastfeed once the surrogate has become pregnant, or even later. The earlier the better, as it gives a longer time for breast preparation.

An adoptive mother can get ready to breastfeed as soon as she decides to adopt, or when she brings her baby home.

Remember, it's never too late to start.

Will I be able to produce adequate milk?

The amount of milk an adoptive or intended mother will produce can vary widely, depending on many factors. While some of these mothers make no milk and some make all the milk their babies need, most mothers can achieve at least a part of the milk supply.

However, the good news is that- adoptive or intended mothers *CAN* breastfeed no matter how much or how little milk they make. They may breastfeed with an *at-breast nursing supplementer* or lactation-aid : a bag or bottle that hangs around the mother's neck that carries extra milk or formula to the mother's nipple through a tiny feeding tube.

Will I have to take lots of medicines to produce breastmilk?

Medicines called galactogogues are used to stimulate your hormones and enhance milk production. These are herbs or hormones for breast preparation or medicines which increase your own breastfeeding hormones. You will be prescribed one or more of these after careful evaluation, and *only* if you chose to take them.

What are other techniques that I can use to increase milk production?

The main way we know to make milk without pregnancy and birth is to stimulate the breasts. That can happen with baby breastfeeding, with an electric breast pump, or a mother can use her hands.

How do I get the baby to suck?

If you begin immediately at birth, latching will be easiest because all babies are born with the natural instinct to breastfeed. Although some of these babies may have difficulties latching, they are more likely to be caused by other issues, not due to adoption or surrogacy.

If you begin latching later, the process may take a little longer. Keeping your baby skin- to- skin as often as you can. Using an at- breast nursing supplementer, baby- led latching, laid- back nursing, biological nurturing, may all help hasten the process.

Is there an expert who can help me through this breastfeeding journey?

Yes indeed. Dr. Manisha Gogri is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) who has interest and experience working with mothers through adoption and surrogacy She can explain the process to you in details and guide you at every step. She will work in co-ordination with you and your doctors, and will come up with a breastfeeding plan most suited to your unique needs.

Feedback from a doctor, who breastfed her baby- born via surrogacy:

“A woman feels complete when she becomes a mother and takes the child to her breast to feed him. For majority of people this is a very normal process and happens without any special effort. However the case with me was different as my child was coming through a surrogate after a long wait and multiple failed attempts. There were no joys of pregnancy for me, no feeling of baby kicking inside me, no feeling of his heartbeat, no extra pampering- but yet I was thrilled as the baby was coming.

Being a physician, I know how important breastmilk is for a child and how breastfeeding creates the bond between the mother and the child. This thought kept playing on my mind and I was determined to find a way to make this happen for me. I researched on internet, spoke with my doctor and then luckily I met Dr. Manisha Gogri. She was like God sent with answers to all my concerns. She started me on a rigorous schedule of medicines and pumping. It took a lot of effort and time but it was well worth it. By the time baby arrived I had a good milk supply and I could breastfeed my baby. The feeling is beyond description when you feed your baby and there is no joy greater than that. Induced lactation is difficult but very much possible. Just keep up the effort, it takes patience but the results are worth trying for.”

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References:

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