

# What is a breastfeeding counselor?

A breastfeeding counselor provides women with support when they are having difficulties breastfeeding their baby. Breastfeeding counselors have received specialized training in understanding lactation and counselling skills. Breastfeeding counselors may work with women in all sorts of different circumstances including:

- Pregnant women to prepare for breastfeeding
  - Especially if she has had problems with breastfeeding experiences or wants to tandem feed her newborn and an older child
- New mothers to establish breastfeeding
- Women experiencing problems such as latch, supply issues, or positioning
- Women feeding multiples
- Women who would like to express breastmilk
- Women who are experiencing problems such as thrush, engorgement, or mastitis

A breastfeeding counselor can help you overcome problems in the early days of parenting that may enable you to continue breastfeeding for as long as you wish to. A breastfeeding counselor, though, will not judge or pressure a mother to continue breastfeeding if she has determined this is what is right for her.

A breastfeeding counselor will generally charge an hourly fee and will often come to your home to observe you and your baby during a feed. She will take a comprehensive history and talk to you about your breastfeeding experience so far. Breastfeeding counselors may also be available for telephone or email support, especially for the follow-up period after you have initially met and identified any potential problems.

Breastfeeding counselors do *not* make decisions for you, or speak for you. This is your breastfeeding experience, your baby, your life! A breastfeeding counselor supports you by providing information and explanations you may want about your choices but it's always *you* who decides what is best for *you*.