

BREASTFEEDING ANY TIME, ANY PLACE, ANYWHERE

THE BEGINNING

My name is Kelly, I am 24 years old and this is my breastfeeding story.....

I was absolutely delighted when I fell pregnant with my first baby. When I had my first visit from my midwife she asked if I was planning to breastfeed. I had never thought about it and to be honest the thought made me cringe slightly. Many thoughts ran through my mind such as I couldn't possibly breastfeed in public and in front of my family and friends. The thought that I would have to do all the feeding, possibly every 2 hours to start with made me tired just thinking about it.



As my pregnancy progressed so did my knowledge about breastfeeding, I realised there were too many advantages to it, for me not to give it a go and after all I have problems with my ears and my partner Mark has asthma and eczema so I thought

"I'm going to give my baby the best possible start in life that I can and if there's a slight chance it will help our son not to suffer with these conditions as we do, then I was definitely going to give it a go."

However the thought of feeding out in public still daunted me but I just thought I would get round it..... I would make sure my baby was always fed before we went out anywhere and if family or friends came round then we could just go upstairs.

On 22nd December 2008 our son Lewis-Addison was born, we immediately had skin to skin contact and he latched on beautifully within moments, it was so overwhelming, the best feeling in the world **"I had done it"**.

In the first week I became very sore and feeding was very painful, I didn't know how I could possibly carry on so went out to buy formula milk but within this time I had a phone call from 'Anne' (Breastfeeding Link Worker) and had my usual visit from my midwife they both gave me information and tips. I didn't feel pressured, I just took it one feed at a time and within a few days we were back on track and everything was fine. But then after about two weeks my breasts changed, they felt empty like I had no milk left and Lewis was feeding very often so I thought he wasn't getting enough however, his weight gain showed otherwise. I later learnt that this was completely normal its just your bodies way of adjusting to your baby's needs...

"Trust your body its amazing how it works!!"

THE FIRST TIME

Feeding was going really well so when Lewis was about 4 weeks old I decided to go out shopping, of course I made sure he was fed before we left the house and was sure he would just sleep through the whole trip, obviously he didn't!! He started screaming halfway around Asda Living I panicked but I had no choice but to feed him. So I went into the cafe and nervously started to feed. Nobody batted an eyelid so I relaxed a bit. Then a couple came over to me and started stroking his face and asked how old he was. I was so shocked and uncomfortable, but later I thought about it and I genuinely don't think they knew I was breastfeeding.



After all its probably more discreet than you think and if they did know then why was I making all this fuss. This really boosted my confidence and as anyone with children will know, **when your baby wants feeding, your baby wants feeding, no matter where you are!!**

ANY TIME, ANY PLACE, ANYWHERE

I think I have fed everywhere now... on the beach, at a presentation I stood on stage receiving a certificate and even on a theme park ride to name a few. **I just felt on top of the world, being scared of breastfeeding out in public was a thing of the past, no one ever really noticed anyway.**



It didn't matter anymore, what mattered was me knowing I was giving my baby the best gift I possibly could and my baby was giving it right back to me... all he wanted was me, even with his eyes closed he would always find his way, that cute little mouth wide open searching for my breast it always made me laugh. The let down reflex I would get just before my baby woke (how did my body know?) and seeing him grow knowing that it was my milk that was causing those chubby little arms and legs.

SUPPORT

To my amazement I also loved the night feeds, laying in complete darkness and pure silence hearing those tiny little gulps and looking down at a very content baby it took any problems I had away and made everything completely worthwhile.

When Lewis was 6 weeks old I developed mastitis which was so painful I went to my doctor who put me on antibiotics which in turn caused thrush in my nipples, which I thought was even worse. I cried at every feed. Why was I putting myself through this? But instead of suffering I turned to the Breastfeeding Link Workers for help. They were so supportive and pointed me in the right direction and within a few days everything was perfect again, I cannot thank them enough.

Breastfeeding is natural but doesn't always come natural there may be times where you need a bit of support, don't be scared to get it, that's what these ladies are here for, if it weren't for them and the other mums I have met I would have probably given up.

My partner Mark has also been very supportive he always encouraged me and told me what a great job I was doing which was really important to me. He never felt left out, he found other ways of bonding and having quality time with Lewis, he would get up with him in the mornings while I got some well deserved rest and they would play together, he also does bath times.



THE FUTURE

I have completed a 12 week La Leche League training course which gave me a complete understanding of breastfeeding and exactly how it all works and I am now hoping to volunteer at Barnsley Hospital in my spare time, so that I can share my knowledge and give support to new mums wishing to breastfeed.

As I write this story Lewis is 12 months old and is still being breastfed, I intend to carry on for as long as we both wish. It gives me the greatest feeling of satisfaction and can honestly say choosing to breastfeed has been one of the best decisions I have ever made and I never thought I would hear myself say that!