

BREASTFEEDING DECODED

*Because Feeding Your
Baby Shouldn't Feel Overwhelming*

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Dedication

To every mother who chose to keep going,
even when it felt uncertain, exhausting, or overwhelming.

To the mothers who questioned themselves,
and still showed up for their babies.

This book is for you.



Acknowledgment

This book would not exist without the mothers who trusted me with their stories.

Every question you asked, every doubt you shared, and every moment of vulnerability you allowed me to witness has shaped the pages of this book.

To the families who welcomed me into their journey—thank you for reminding me that breastfeeding is not just about feeding, but about understanding, patience, and connection.

To my mentors and colleagues who continue to deepen my learning—your guidance has been invaluable.

And to my family, for their constant support—thank you for allowing me to do this work with dedication and heart.

Author's Note

When I began working with mothers, I noticed a pattern.

Not of lack of effort—but of lack of clarity.

Mothers were trying their best.

They were showing up, learning, adjusting, and doing everything they could.

And yet, they were often left feeling:

- Confused
- Overwhelmed
- Unsure of themselves

Not because they were incapable.

But because they were navigating breastfeeding with:

- Conflicting advice
- Unrealistic expectations
- Very little practical understanding

This book was created to change that.

It is not a rulebook.

It is a guide to help you understand:

- What is happening
- Why it is happening
- What you can do about it

So that instead of second-guessing yourself,
you can move forward with confidence.

You don't need to know everything.

You just need the **right understanding**.

Foreword

By Dr. Poonam Upadhyay

Breastfeeding is often described as natural. Yet, in clinical practice, we see that for many mothers, it can feel complex and overwhelming in the early days.

The transition into motherhood brings significant physical and emotional changes. At the same time, mothers are often navigating a large volume of information—much of it conflicting and not always practical. In such moments, clear, evidence-based, and compassionate guidance becomes essential.

Breastfeeding Decoded stands out for its ability to simplify this journey without reducing its depth. Arushi Agrawal brings together clinical understanding and real-life insights to help mothers make sense of what they are experiencing. The book encourages observation, confidence, and informed decision-making—an approach that aligns well with patient-centred care.

I particularly appreciate the emphasis on normalising common concerns and supporting maternal wellbeing alongside infant care. This perspective is both necessary and reassuring.

This book will serve as a valuable resource for mothers and families, helping them approach breastfeeding with greater clarity and confidence.

Warm regards,

Dr. Poonam Upadhyay

**Director – Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology
Eternal Hospital, Jaipur**



How To Use This Book

This book is not meant to be read in one sitting.

It is meant to support you through different stages of your journey.

You may choose to:

- Read it from beginning to end
- Or come back to specific chapters when you need guidance

Each chapter includes:

- Clear explanations to help you understand what is happening
- Practical insights you can apply immediately
- Gentle reminders to support your emotional experience
- Quick guides to simplify decision-making
- Reflections to help you pause and process

Take what you need.

Come back when you need more.

There is no right way to use this book—only the way that supports you best.



A Note for Partners & Caregivers

If you are supporting a mother on this journey, this book is for you too.

Breastfeeding is often seen as something only the mother does.

But in reality, it is shaped by the environment around her.

Your support matters more than you may realise.

You can support by:

- Offering reassurance instead of advice
- Helping create a calm and comfortable environment
- Taking on practical responsibilities
- Encouraging her to rest
- Being patient when things feel difficult

Sometimes, the most valuable support is simply being present.

You don't need to have all the answers.

You just need to stand beside her.

The Truth No One Prepares You For

Society often tells women that motherhood is instinctive.

That once your baby arrives, everything will fall into place naturally.

For some, parts of this feel true.

For many, it does not.

Motherhood is learned in real time—
while you are tired, healing, and adjusting.

You are not failing if it feels unfamiliar.

You are learning.



About the Author

Arushi Agrawal is an internationally certified Lactation Consultant and a trusted guide for mothers navigating the early stages of motherhood. With over six years of experience and having supported more than 6,000 mothers, she brings thoughtful expertise in breastfeeding support, infant sleep, infant massage, and maternal emotional well-being.

Her journey into this field is deeply personal. Like many mothers, Arushi began her own motherhood journey with questions, challenges, and a heartfelt desire to do the very best for her baby. What began as a search for answers gradually unfolded into a deep and enduring commitment to understanding breastfeeding, infant care, and the emotional nuances of new motherhood.

From an early age, she aspired to become a doctor — to heal, to support, and to make a meaningful difference. While that path did not take shape in the conventional sense, motherhood gently led her back to that purpose in a way that was both unexpected and profoundly aligned.

Today, Arushi's work reflects a refined balance of science and sensitivity. Through her guidance, she empowers mothers to trust themselves, nurture their babies with confidence, and embrace motherhood with a sense of calm, clarity, and quiet strength.

Where science meets sensitivity, and motherhood finds its rhythm.

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Part 1

Beginning Your Journey

Laying the emotional and practical foundation

Chapter 1

What Every Mother Should Know Before Day One



Preparing your mind before your body

Before your baby arrives, most of the preparation tends to be visible.

You prepare the nursery.

You arrange the clothes.

You read about labour and delivery.

There is a checklist for almost everything.

And yet, one of the most important parts of early motherhood—feeding—often remains the least prepared for.

Not because mothers don't care.

But because they are told something that sounds reassuring... but can quietly create pressure:

“Breastfeeding is natural. It will just happen.”

This idea is comforting at first.

But when reality feels different, it can leave mothers confused and alone in their experience.

The Gap Between Expectation and Reality

Many mothers enter the first few days believing that:

- Their baby will latch easily
- Feeding will settle into a pattern quickly
- Their body will “know what to do” immediately

And when this doesn’t happen, the questions begin:

Why is my baby feeding so often?

Why does this feel harder than I expected?

Am I doing something wrong?

This gap—between what you expected and what you experience—is where most early anxiety begins.

Not because something is wrong.

But because something was misunderstood.

What Breastfeeding Actually Is

Breastfeeding is not a single action.

It is a **dynamic process** involving:

- Your baby learning how to latch and feed
- Your body learning how much milk to produce
- Your nervous system adjusting to constant responsiveness
- Your emotions adapting to a completely new role

All of this is happening **simultaneously**, often while you are:

- Recovering physically
- Sleeping less than usual
- Processing a major life transition

When seen this way, it becomes clear:

Breastfeeding is not meant to feel effortless immediately.

It is meant to **develop**.

Why Early Understanding Changes Everything

When you don't understand what is normal, every experience feels like a potential problem.

Frequent feeding feels like insufficiency.

Unsettled behaviour feels like failure.

Uncertainty feels like inadequacy.

But when you understand the process, something shifts.

You stop reacting with fear...

and start responding with awareness.

You begin to see:

- Frequent feeding as *building supply*
- Cluster feeding as *a normal pattern*
- Adjustment as *part of learning*

Understanding does not remove all difficulty.

But it removes unnecessary panic.

The Three Pillars of a Strong Start

Instead of trying to learn everything, focus on what actually makes a difference in the early days:

1. Position Before Perfection

Many early struggles are not about milk—they are about positioning.

If your body is uncomfortable, your baby struggles to latch effectively.

A small adjustment in how you sit or hold your baby can change the entire feeding experience.

2. Observation Before Assumption

It is easy to jump to conclusions:

- “My milk is low”
- “My baby is not feeding well”

But babies communicate through patterns.

Watching closely often gives more accurate answers than guessing.

3. Support Before Struggle

One of the biggest mistakes mothers make is waiting too long before asking for help.

Not because they don’t need it—but because they feel they *should manage on their own*.

But breastfeeding is not meant to be figured out in isolation.

Early guidance:

- Prevents small issues from becoming bigger
- Builds confidence faster
- Reduces emotional stress

Did You Know?

Research shows that mothers who receive early, hands-on breastfeeding support are significantly more likely to continue breastfeeding successfully beyond the first few weeks.

What the First Week Is Really About

The first week is not about mastering breastfeeding.

It is about:

- Getting familiar with your baby
- Allowing your body to respond
- Beginning to recognise patterns

It is a **phase of adjustment**, not achievement.

There will be moments where you feel unsure.

That does not mean you are behind.

It means you are in the process.

A Gentle Reminder

You are not expected to know everything at the start.

You are expected to **learn, slowly and steadily**.

Quick Guide: What Is Normal in the First Week

- ✓ Feeding 8–12 times in 24 hours
- ✓ Baby wanting to stay at the breast
- ✓ Irregular or unpredictable patterns
- ✓ Feeling unsure or overwhelmed

 Seek support if:

- Pain is sharp and persistent
- Baby is unable to latch
- There are very few or no wet diapers

From My Practice

A mother once came to me on her third day postpartum, visibly anxious.

She said,

“My baby is feeding all the time. I don’t think my milk is enough.”

When we spoke, I asked her to describe what was happening.

Her baby was:

- Latching
- Feeding frequently
- Settling at times
- Passing urine

Everything she described was normal.

But without that context, it felt like something was going wrong.

Once she understood what was happening, her anxiety reduced—not because feeding changed, but because her interpretation did.

✧ Pause & Reflect

What expectations am I holding about breastfeeding right now?
Are they based on understanding—or assumption?

♥ Affirmations

I am allowed to learn at my own pace.
My baby and I are building this together.
I don't need to get everything right to move forward.

Closing This Chapter

You are not stepping into a role you must already know.
You are stepping into a relationship that will unfold with time.
The more you understand,
the less you will doubt.
And that understanding begins here.



Chapter 2

Understanding How Breastfeeding Works

So you can trust your body, not question it

In the early days, one of the most common thoughts mothers have is:

“Is my body really making enough milk?”

This question often comes not from what is actually happening—but from what is *not visible*.

Unlike bottle feeding, breastfeeding does not show you numbers.

You cannot measure it in millilitres.

You cannot “see” how much your baby is getting.

And in that invisibility, uncertainty quietly grows.

Understanding the Beginning: Colostrum

In the first few days after birth, your body produces colostrum—a thick, concentrated milk.

It is often yellowish in colour, though the shade can vary.

What matters is not how it looks, but what it does.

Colostrum is:

- Rich in antibodies
- Easy for your baby to digest
- Produced in small, intentional quantities

Many mothers worry because it seems “too little.”

But your baby’s stomach at birth is very small—about the size of a cherry.

What feels like “not enough” is often exactly what is needed.

The Demand–Supply System (Simplified, But Powerful)

Breastfeeding works on a beautifully responsive system:

👉 The more milk is removed, the more milk your body produces.

This means:

- Frequent feeding builds supply
- Effective latch improves supply
- Skipping feeds can reduce stimulation

Your body is not working on a fixed schedule.

It is constantly adapting based on signals.



Why Frequent Feeding Is Essential (Not Problematic)

In the early days, babies feed often.

This is not because:

- Your milk is low
- Your baby is not satisfied

It is because:

- Your baby is learning to feed
- Your body is learning how much to produce

Frequent feeding is the **language of communication** between your baby and your body.

💡 Did You Know?

Breast milk changes not only over weeks—but even during a single feed, shifting from lighter foremilk to richer hindmilk.

What Happens After the First Few Days

Around day 3–5, many mothers notice changes:

- Breasts feel fuller
- Milk appears whiter and more abundant
- Baby’s swallowing becomes more noticeable

This is often called “milk coming in.”

But in reality, milk has been present from the beginning—it is now increasing in volume.

Why Doubt Still Appears (Even When Things Are Normal)

Even when everything is progressing well, mothers may still feel unsure.

You may think:

- “Why is my baby feeding again?”
- “Shouldn’t there be a gap now?”

This is where understanding needs reinforcement.

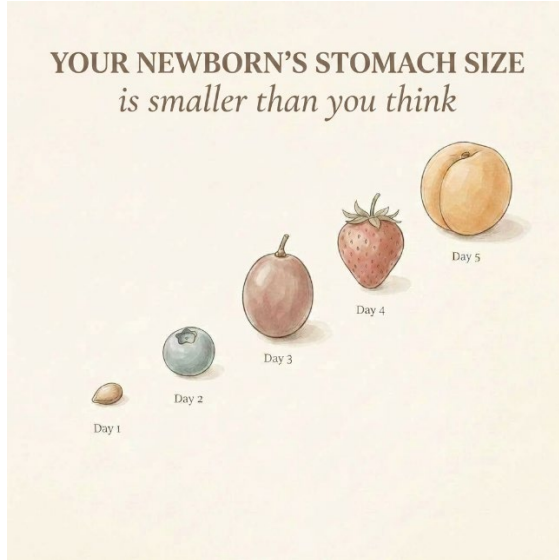
Because knowledge is not just about learning once—it is about **remembering what is normal when doubt appears.**



A Gentle Reminder

Your body is not guessing.

It is responding—continuously, intelligently, and in real time.



Quick Guide: Signs Your Body Is Responding Well

- ✓ Your baby is actively feeding
- ✓ You notice swallowing during feeds
- ✓ Your breasts feel fuller after a few days
- ✓ Your baby passes urine regularly

 Seek support if:

- Baby is unable to latch effectively
- There are very few wet diapers
- Feeding feels consistently ineffective

From My Practice

A mother once told me,

“I don’t feel like I have enough milk—it just doesn’t seem like much.”

When we spoke further, she described:

- Frequent feeding
- Audible swallowing
- Regular wet diapers

Everything pointed to adequate milk.

What she was experiencing was not low supply—it was lack of visible measurement.

Once she understood how breastfeeding works, her confidence improved significantly.

Pause & Reflect

What part of breastfeeding feels uncertain because I cannot “see” it?

Affirmations

My body is responding to my baby.

I can trust the process as it develops.

Understanding helps me feel calmer and more confident.

Closing This Chapter

Breastfeeding does not rely on fixed numbers.

It relies on a dynamic relationship between you and your baby.

When you understand how this system works,
you begin to trust it.

And that trust reduces more anxiety than any number ever could.

Part 2

Building the Foundation

Understanding the early days and what is normal

Chapter 3

The First Few Days

Where everything feels new—and that's okay

The first few days after your baby arrives can feel like a blur.

Time moves differently.

Sleep becomes fragmented.

Your body is recovering.

And in the middle of all this—you are feeding, again and again.

Many mothers expect these days to feel calm and intuitive.

Instead, they often feel:

- Intense
- Repetitive
- Emotionally charged

And without understanding, this intensity can feel overwhelming.

What These Days Are Really About

The first few days are not about routine.

They are about:

- Adjustment
- Learning
- Connection

Your baby is adjusting to the world.

Your body is adjusting to feeding.

You are adjusting to both.

Why Feeding Feels So Frequent

Newborns feed often.

Sometimes every hour.

Sometimes even more frequently.

This can feel exhausting—but it has a purpose.

Frequent feeding:

- Stimulates milk production
- Helps your baby regulate
- Builds your breastfeeding rhythm

Understanding Cluster Feeding

There may be periods—especially in the evening—when your baby feeds repeatedly over a short span.

This is called **cluster feeding**.

It is one of the most misunderstood patterns.

It does not mean:

- Your milk is insufficient
- Your baby is not satisfied

It means:

- Your baby is increasing demand
- Your body is responding



💡 **Did You Know?**

Cluster feeding is a normal developmental pattern and often happens during growth phases.

Your Baby Is Not Just Feeding for Milk

In the early days, feeding serves multiple purposes:

- Nourishment
- Comfort
- Regulation of body temperature
- Emotional security

This is why feeding can feel constant.

Your baby is not separating needs the way adults do.

🌿 **A Gentle Reminder**

Your baby is not asking for too much.

They are asking for what they need.



Quick Guide: What to Expect in the First 3 Days

- ✓ 8–12 feeds in 24 hours
- ✓ Small amounts of colostrum
- ✓ Short gaps between feeds
- ✓ Sleepy but frequent feeding attempts



Seek support if:

- Baby is extremely difficult to wake
- No urine output
- Persistent feeding difficulty

What You Might Feel (And Why It Matters)

Emotionally, these days can feel intense.

You may feel:

- Tired beyond expectation
- Unsure about what is normal
- Sensitive or overwhelmed

This is not just about feeding.

It is about transition.

Understanding this helps you respond with **self-compassion instead of self-judgment**.



From My Practice

A mother once told me on day two,

“I feel like all I’m doing is feeding. Is this normal?”

Her baby was:

- Latching
- Feeding frequently
- Sleeping in short stretches

Everything was normal.

What she needed was not correction—but reassurance.

Once she understood this, she stopped trying to “fix” the pattern and started responding to it.

Pause & Reflect

Am I expecting structure in a phase that is meant to be fluid?

Affirmations

This phase is temporary.

I can take this one feed at a time.

I am adjusting, and that is enough.

Closing This Chapter

The first few days are not about getting everything right.

They are about beginning.

And beginnings are often uncertain.

But with understanding,
they become less overwhelming—and more manageable.

Chapter 4

Breastfeeding — Understanding the Whole Experience

Beyond milk—what really shapes feeding

Breastfeeding is often reduced to one central question:

“Is my baby getting enough?”

But feeding is influenced by much more than quantity.

It is shaped by:

- How your baby latches
- How you are positioned
- How your body feels
- How your environment supports you

Understanding this broader picture changes how you approach feeding.

Why Feeding Feels So Intense

Breastfeeding activates oxytocin—the hormone responsible for bonding.

This hormone:

- Supports milk release
- Enhances emotional connection
- Increases sensitivity

This is why feeding can feel:

- Deeply comforting
- Emotionally overwhelming



- Physically demanding

All at once.

Latch: Where Comfort Begins

Latch is not just a technical detail.

It determines:

- How effectively milk is removed
- Whether feeding feels comfortable

A good latch:

- Is deep
- Does not cause ongoing pain
- Allows rhythmic sucking and swallowing

Pain beyond initial seconds is not something to ignore.

It is feedback.

Positioning: The Hidden Foundation

Positioning is one of the most underestimated aspects of breastfeeding.

When your body is unsupported:

- You lean forward
- Your shoulders tighten
- Feeding becomes tiring

When supported:

- Your baby aligns better
- Latch improves
- Feeding feels easier



Did You Know?

Even minor positioning adjustments can significantly improve feeding comfort and milk transfer.

The Role of Emotions in Milk Flow

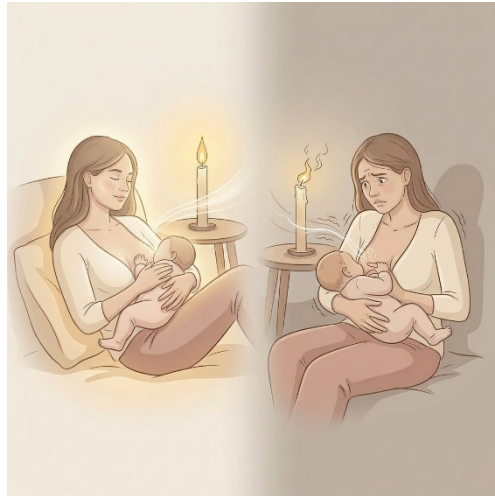
Milk production and milk release are different.

- Production → ongoing process
- Release (let-down) → influenced by oxytocin

Stress can temporarily affect let-down.

This does not mean your milk is gone.

It means your body needs reassurance.



A Gentle Reminder

You don't need to force calm.

You need support that helps you feel safe.



Quick Guide: Improve Your Feeding Experience

- Sit comfortably with back support
- Bring baby to breast (not breast to baby)
- Ensure baby's body is aligned
- Reduce distractions if possible

From My Practice

A mother once struggled with slow feeds and felt her milk was low.

But when we observed, her shoulders were tense, and she was leaning forward.

We adjusted:

- Her posture
- Her support

Within one session, feeding improved.

Her milk hadn't changed.

Her positioning had.

Pause & Reflect

What feels hardest during feeding—technique or comfort?

Affirmations

My comfort matters in this process.

Small adjustments can make a big difference.

I am learning what works for me and my baby.

What to Do When Feeding Feels “Off” (Even Without a Clear Problem)

There may be moments when feeding doesn't feel quite right.

Not painful.

Not clearly problematic.

But not fully comfortable either.

In these moments, instead of searching for a diagnosis, start with simple adjustments.

Quick Reset Checklist

✓ Check your posture

Are your shoulders relaxed or tense?

✓ Check your baby's alignment

Is your baby's body fully facing you?

✓ Check the environment

Is there noise, distraction, or pressure?

✓ Check your state

Are you rushed, anxious, or being watched?

Often, feeding improves not by changing something major,
but by removing small sources of tension.

From My Practice

A mother once told me:

“Nothing is wrong... but something just doesn't feel smooth.”

There was no pain.

Her baby was gaining weight.

But feeding felt effortful.

When we observed closely, we noticed:

- She was slightly leaning forward
- Her arm was unsupported
- She was constantly adjusting mid-feed

We made one change:

Added proper arm support and helped her lean back.

Within minutes:

- Feeding slowed down
- Baby settled
- She relaxed

Nothing clinical changed.

But the experience transformed.

A Gentle Reminder

Not every difficulty needs a diagnosis.
Some just need a small adjustment.

Closing This Chapter

Breastfeeding is not just about milk.

It is about how everything comes together:
your body, your baby, and your environment.

When you understand the whole experience,
you stop trying to fix one part—and start supporting the whole.

Part 3

Getting It Right

Building confidence through clarity and practical skills

Chapter 5

Latch & Positioning Made Simple

Where comfort meets effectiveness

One of the biggest misconceptions about breastfeeding is that if your baby is at the breast, feeding is automatically effective.

But feeding is not just about *being there*.

It is about *how* your baby is positioned and *how* they latch.

And small differences here can completely change your experience.

Why Latch Matters More Than You Think

A good latch determines:

- How much milk your baby receives
- Whether feeding feels comfortable or painful
- How well your supply is maintained

A shallow latch may:

- Cause nipple pain
- Reduce milk transfer
- Make feeds longer and more tiring

Understanding a Good Latch (Practically)

Instead of focusing only on what it looks like, focus on what you feel and observe.

A good latch usually means:

- Your baby's mouth is wide open before attaching
- More of the lower areola is inside the mouth
- Lips are flanged outward
- Chin touches the breast

- You hear or see swallowing

Most importantly:

👉 You feel pulling—not sharp pain.

Positioning: The Foundation of a Good Latch

Before adjusting the latch, check positioning.

Many latch issues are actually positioning issues.

Start with yourself:

- Sit comfortably
- Support your back and arms
- Avoid leaning forward

Then your baby:

- Body fully facing you (tummy to tummy)
- Head aligned with body (not twisted)
- Close enough—no gap

👉 Always remember:

Bring the baby to the breast, not the breast to the baby.



💡 Did You Know?

Even a slight tilt or gap in positioning can affect how deeply your baby latches.

🌿 A Gentle Reminder

If feeding hurts consistently, your body is asking for adjustment—not endurance.

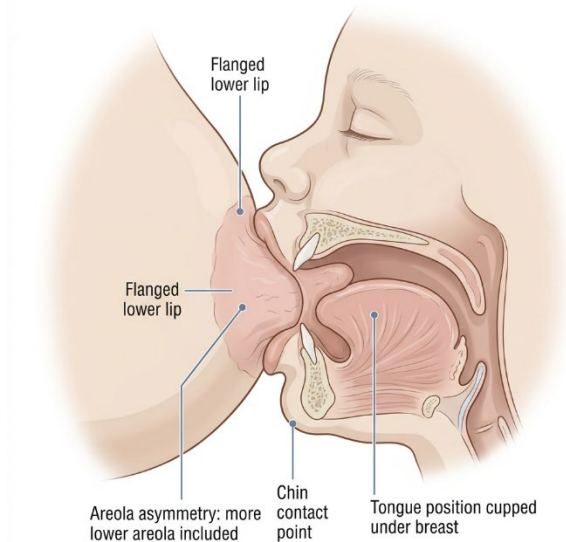
📊 Quick Guide: Fixing a Painful Latch

If feeding hurts:

- ✓ Check if baby's body is fully facing you
- ✓ Bring baby closer (not just the head)
- ✓ Wait for a wide open mouth before latching
- ✓ Break suction gently and try again

🚫 Do not:

- Continue through sharp pain
- Assume it will “get better on its own”



From My Practice

A mother once told me,
“I think my baby just doesn’t latch well.”

When we observed, her baby was slightly turned away and not fully aligned.

We made one adjustment—bringing the baby closer and aligning the body.

Within minutes, pain reduced and feeding improved.

Nothing changed in the baby.
Everything changed in positioning.

Pause & Reflect

Does feeding feel comfortable—or something I am tolerating?

Affirmations

I can adjust and improve my feeding experience.
Comfort is possible.
I am learning what works for us.

Chapter 6

Understanding Milk Supply

Moving from fear to clarity

Few topics create as much anxiety as milk supply.

Many mothers worry:

- “Do I have enough?”
- “Why doesn’t it feel like much?”

But milk supply is often misunderstood—not because it is complicated, but because it is invisible.

How Milk Supply Actually Works

Milk supply is not fixed.

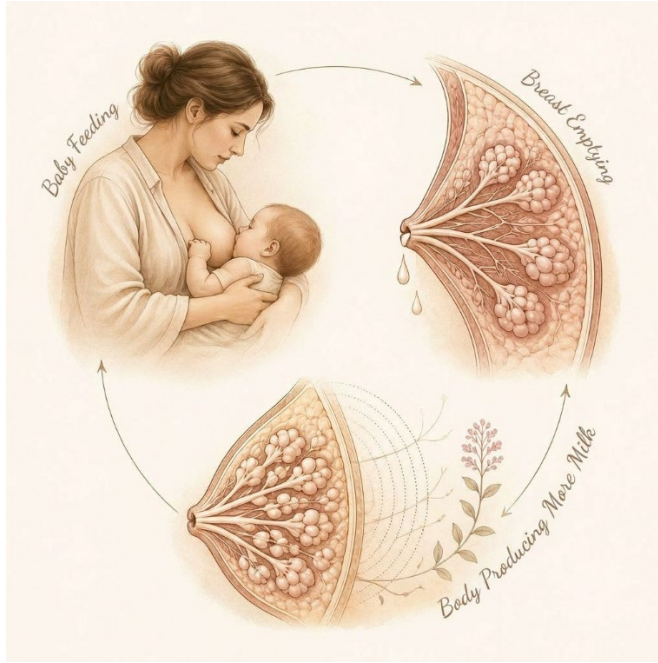
It is **responsive and dynamic**.

Your body increases or adjusts supply based on:

- How often milk is removed
- How effectively milk is removed

This means:

👉 Supply is built through *use*, not assumption.



What Affects Milk Supply

Instead of focusing on special foods or remedies, focus on what truly matters:

1. Frequency of feeding

More frequent feeding → stronger signal → better supply

2. Effectiveness of feeding

Good latch → better milk removal → better supply

3. Consistency

Regular stimulation matters more than occasional efforts

What Does NOT Define Your Supply

Many mothers rely on unreliable indicators:

- How “full” breasts feel

- Pump output
- Baby feeding frequently

These can be misleading.

Did You Know?

Pump output is not an accurate measure of your milk supply—babies are usually far more efficient than pumps.

A Gentle Reminder

Your body responds to stimulation—not to your doubts.

Quick Guide: Supporting Your Milk Supply

- ✓ ✓ Feed on demand
- ✓ Ensure good latch
- ✓ Avoid long gaps in early weeks
- ✓ Stay hydrated and rested (as much as possible)

 Avoid:

- Skipping feeds
- Relying only on pumping for assessment

When Supply Feels Low

Before assuming low supply, check:

- Is baby latching well?
- Is feeding frequent enough?
- Are there enough wet diapers?

Often, the issue is not supply—but perception.

From My Practice

A mother once said,
“My breasts feel soft—I think my milk is decreasing.”

In reality, her body had adapted.

Soft breasts often mean:

👉 Your body is producing milk efficiently—not storing excess.

Once she understood this, her anxiety reduced significantly.

✧ **Pause & Reflect**

Am I judging my supply based on feeling—or actual signs?

💛 **Affirmations**

My body can respond and adjust.

I can support my supply through consistency.

I don't need visible proof to trust the process.

Chapter 7

Is My Baby Getting Enough?

Replacing doubt with clear signs

This is one of the most common and persistent questions in early motherhood.

“Is my baby getting enough?”

Because breastfeeding is not visible, this question can become constant.

But the answer does not come from guessing.

It comes from **observing the right indicators**.

Shift from “How Much” to “How Is My Baby Doing”

Instead of asking:

👉 “How much milk is my baby getting?”

Ask:

👉 “How is my baby responding?”

Your baby gives you reliable signs—when you know what to look for.

Key Signs Your Baby Is Getting Enough

1. Wet diapers

Around 6 or more wet diapers after the first few days

2. Stool pattern

Regular stools in early weeks

3. Active feeding

You see or hear swallowing

4. Behaviour

Baby is settled after some feeds (not all)

5. Weight gain

Steady growth over time

Baby Is Getting Enough Milk



6+ Wet Diapers
Daily

☐



Rhythmic Suck
& Swallow

☐



Settles After
Feeding

☐

Did You Know?

It is normal for babies to lose some weight in the first few days and regain it within 10–14 days.

A Gentle Reminder

Your baby's behaviour and output are more reliable than your fears.

Quick Guide: Enough Milk Checklist

- 6+ wet diapers/day
- Audible swallowing

- Baby feeds actively
- Steady weight gain

If most of these are present → feeding is likely adequate.

What Can Be Misleading

- Frequent feeding → normal
- Fussiness → not always hunger
- Wanting to stay at breast → often comfort

From My Practice

A mother once tracked every minute of feeding, worried her baby wasn't getting enough.

But when we reviewed:

- Diapers were adequate
- Baby was gaining weight
- Feeding was active

Nothing was wrong.

She didn't need more milk.

She needed more clarity.

Pause & Reflect

Am I focusing on signs—or assumptions?

Affirmations

My baby is showing me what they need.

I can observe and trust these signs.

I don't need to guess when I can understand.

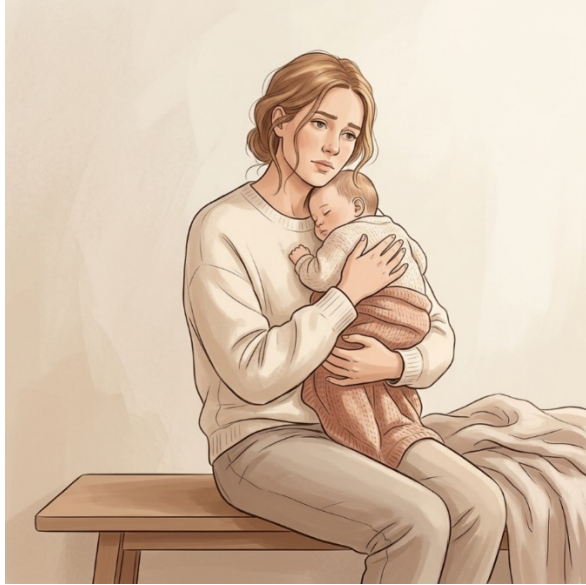
Part 4

Common Challenges & Myths

Managing difficulties with understanding—not fear

Chapter 8

When Feeding Feels Difficult



Understanding what's happening—so you can respond, not panic

There are moments in breastfeeding when things don't feel smooth.

Your baby may seem unsettled.

Feeding may feel uncomfortable.

You may begin to question everything you thought was going well.

These moments can feel discouraging—not because they are uncommon, but because they are unexpected.

Why Difficult Phases Happen

Breastfeeding is not a linear journey.

There are phases where:

- Your baby's needs change

- Your body is adjusting
- External factors (fatigue, environment) influence feeding

These shifts can temporarily make feeding feel harder.

This does not mean you are going backwards.

It means something is changing.

Common Situations That Feel Like Problems

You may notice:

- Baby suddenly feeding more often
- Fussiness at the breast
- Pulling away or crying during feeds
- Shorter or longer feeding durations

Without context, these can feel alarming.

With understanding, they become manageable.

Responding Instead of Reacting

Instead of immediately assuming something is wrong, pause and observe:

- Is your baby going through a growth phase?
- Has your routine or environment changed?
- Are you more tired or tense than usual?

Often, feeding reflects what is happening around it—not just within it.

Did You Know?

Babies often change feeding patterns during growth spurts, which can temporarily increase frequency or fussiness.

A Gentle Reminder

A difficult phase does not mean a failing journey.

It means your baby—and your body—are adjusting.



Quick Guide: What To Do When Feeding Feels Difficult

- ✓ Pause and observe before assuming
- ✓ Check latch and positioning
- ✓ Offer feeds when baby is calm
- ✓ Reduce distractions
- ✓ Seek support early if unsure



Avoid:

- Making sudden major changes
- Comparing with other babies



From My Practice

A mother once came to me worried because her baby had suddenly started fussing during feeds.

She thought her milk had reduced.

But her baby was going through a growth spurt.

We made small adjustments:

- Feeding in a calmer environment
- Offering feeds earlier

Within days, feeding settled again.



Pause & Reflect

When feeding feels difficult, do I immediately assume something is wrong?



Affirmations

This phase is temporary.

I can observe before reacting.

I am capable of adapting with my baby.

Chapter 9

Common Breastfeeding Challenges

What they mean—and what you can do

Breastfeeding challenges are often seen as signs of failure.

But in reality, they are **signals**.

Signals that something needs adjustment—not abandonment.

1. Nipple Pain

Pain is one of the earliest and most common challenges.

Mild discomfort in the beginning can happen.

But ongoing pain is not something to ignore.

Common causes:

- Shallow latch
- Incorrect positioning
- Baby not opening mouth wide enough

What helps:

- Adjust latch
- Break suction and relatch
- Seek support early

2. Engorgement

Breasts may feel:

- Full
- Tight
- Uncomfortable

This usually happens when milk increases.

What helps:

- Frequent feeding
- Gentle expression for comfort
- Warm compress before feeds
- Cold compress after feeds

3. Blocked Ducts

You may feel:

- A tender lump
- Local discomfort

What helps:

- Frequent feeding
- Gentle massage
- Warmth before feeds

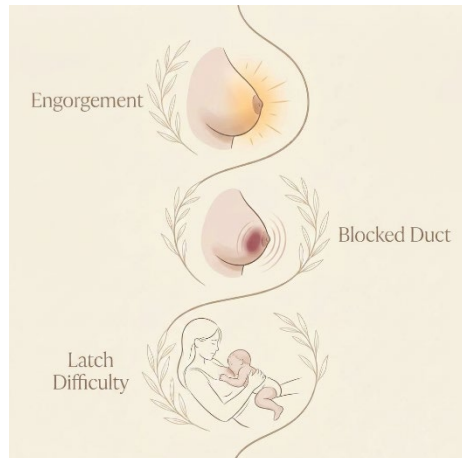
👉 If accompanied by fever or flu-like symptoms → seek medical care (possible mastitis)

💡 Did You Know?

Most breastfeeding challenges improve quickly when addressed early.

🌿 A Gentle Reminder

Pain is feedback—not something you need to tolerate.



Quick Guide: Immediate Action Steps

Issue	First Step
Pain	Check latch
Engorgement	Feed frequently
Blocked duct	Massage + feed

From My Practice

A mother once tried to “push through” pain, thinking it was normal.

By the time she reached out, feeding had become stressful.

With simple latch correction, her pain reduced within a few days.

She didn’t need to endure—she needed support.

Pause & Reflect

Am I tolerating something that needs adjustment?

Affirmations

I deserve comfort in this journey.

I can ask for help early.

Challenges can be resolved.

4.Perceived Low Supply

One of the most common concerns is:

“I don’t think I have enough milk.”

But in many cases, supply is adequate—and the concern comes from misinterpretation.

What Leads to This Feeling

- Baby feeding frequently
- Breasts feeling soft
- Pump output appearing low

These can feel like signs of low supply—but often are not.

What to Check First

Before assuming low supply, observe:

- ✓ Is your baby passing enough urine?
- ✓ Is your baby actively swallowing during feeds?
- ✓ Is your baby gaining weight over time?

If these are present, supply is likely sufficient.

What To Do

- ✓ Increase direct feeding frequency
- ✓ Check latch and positioning
- ✓ Avoid unnecessary comparisons
- ✓ Seek reassurance early

Did You Know?

Many mothers who believe they have low supply actually have normal supply. What's missing is clarity, not milk.

5. Baby Pulling Away or Fussing at the Breast

This can feel worrying.

You may think:

- “My baby doesn’t want to feed”
- “Something is wrong with my milk”

But often, this behaviour is temporary.

Possible Reasons

- Baby is overstimulated
- Milk flow feels too fast or too slow
- Baby needs a pause
- There is environmental distraction

What Helps

- ✓ Feed in a quieter space
- ✓ Offer feeding earlier (before baby is very upset)
- ✓ Pause and burp if needed
- ✓ Stay calm and avoid forcing the latch

From My Practice

A mother once said:

“My baby keeps pulling away—I think feeding is not working anymore.”

But her baby was:

- Growing well
- Feeding effectively at other times

The issue was evening overstimulation.

We changed:

- Feeding environment
- Timing

Within a few days, feeding improved.

A Gentle Reminder

Behaviour changes do not always mean something is wrong.

They often mean something is changing.

Chapter 10

Breastfeeding Myths — Decoded**



Clearing confusion so you can move forward with confidence

Breastfeeding is surrounded by advice.

Some of it is helpful.

Much of it is confusing.

And often, the most confidently shared advice is not always the most accurate.

This is how myths take hold.

They sound logical.

They are repeated often.

And over time, they begin to feel like the truth.

Without clarity, it becomes difficult to know what to trust.

This chapter is not about giving you more advice.

It is about helping you understand what is accurate—so you can make decisions with confidence.

Why Myths Feel So Convincing

Myths persist because they:

- Sound simple
- Offer quick answers
- Are passed down through generations
- Create fear when not followed

When you are already feeling unsure, it becomes easy to hold on to anything that sounds certain.

But certainty is not always the same as accuracy.



💡 Did You Know?

Many breastfeeding concerns come not from actual problems—but from misinformation.

10 Common Breastfeeding Myths — Explained Simply

Myth 1: Frequent feeding means low milk supply

Reality:

Frequent feeding is how your baby builds your milk supply.

In the early weeks, babies feed often because:

- Their stomach is small
- They are learning to feed
- Your body is adjusting production

Frequent feeding is communication—not insufficiency.

Myth 2: You should feed your baby on a fixed schedule

Reality:

Breastfeeding works best when it is responsive—not clock-based.

Feeding by the clock can:

- Reduce stimulation
- Affect milk supply
- Ignore your baby’s natural cues

Your baby does not follow a schedule in the early weeks.

They follow need.

Feeding on demand supports both:

- Milk supply
- Emotional regulation

Myth 3: Soft breasts mean low milk

Reality:

Soft breasts often mean your body has adjusted efficiently.

In the beginning, fullness is more noticeable.

Over time, your body becomes more responsive and produces what is needed—without storing excess.

Soft does not mean empty.
It means regulated.

Myth 4: Pump output reflects your milk supply

Reality:

A pump does not measure your supply.

Output depends on:

- Comfort
- Pump fit
- Timing
- Let-down response

Your baby is far more efficient than a pump.

Low pump output does not mean low milk.

Myth 5: Pain is normal in breastfeeding

Reality:

Mild sensitivity in the initial days can happen.

Ongoing pain is not normal.

Pain is feedback.

It usually indicates:

- Latch issues
- Positioning concerns

Pain should be addressed—not tolerated.

Myth 6: If the baby feeds again soon, the milk wasn't enough

Reality:

Babies do not feed only for hunger.

They also feed for:

- Comfort
- Regulation
- Connection

Short gaps between feeds are normal—especially in early weeks.
It does not mean your milk is insufficient.

Myth 7: Certain foods dramatically increase milk supply

Reality:

No food can replace effective milk removal.

While a balanced diet supports overall health, milk supply is primarily influenced by:

- Frequency of feeding
- Effectiveness of feeding

Food supports you.

Feeding drives supply.

Myth 8: You must wait for breasts to “refill” before feeding again

Reality:

Breasts are not storage containers—they are continuously producing milk.

Waiting unnecessarily can:

- Reduce stimulation
- Affect supply

You can feed whenever your baby shows cues.

Milk is being made even during feeding.

Myth 9: A calm baby always means enough feeding—and a fussy baby means hunger

Reality:

Baby behaviour is not always a direct indicator of hunger.

Fussiness can be due to:

- Overstimulation

- Tiredness
- Need for comfort

And a calm baby may still need feeding.

This is why observation of multiple signs is important—not just behaviour.

Myth 10: If breastfeeding feels difficult, something is wrong

Reality:

Breastfeeding can feel difficult in the beginning because it is new—for both you and your baby.

Difficulty does not always mean a problem.

It often means:

- You are learning
- Your baby is learning
- Your body is adjusting

With the right understanding and small adjustments, things usually improve.



A Gentle Reminder

You don't need to follow every piece of advice.

You need to understand what is happening.



Quick Guide: How to Evaluate Advice

- ✓ Does this align with how breastfeeding works?
- ✓ Does it match what my baby is showing me?
- ✓ Does it reduce confusion—or increase fear?
- ✓ Is it based on evidence or assumption?

If something creates more doubt than clarity—it deserves to be questioned.

From My Practice

A mother once reduced feeding frequency because she was told to “create a routine.”

Within a few days:

- Her baby became unsettled
- Her milk supply reduced

When we shifted back to responsive feeding, things improved quickly.

The issue was not her body.

It was the advice.

Pause & Reflect

What advice have I followed without questioning?

Does it support my understanding—or create confusion?

Affirmations

I can choose clarity over confusion.

I trust informed guidance.

I am capable of making decisions that support my baby and myself.

Closing This Chapter

Breastfeeding does not require you to follow every rule you hear.

It requires you to understand what is true.

And when you have that clarity,
you no longer need to rely on conflicting advice.

You can move forward—with confidence.

Chapter 11

Managing Advice from Everyone



Protecting your confidence in a noisy world

Once your baby arrives, advice comes from everywhere:

- Family
- Friends
- Online sources
- Well-meaning strangers

Some of it is helpful.

Some of it creates doubt.

Why Advice Feels Overwhelming

Because it often:

- Conflicts
- Lacks context
- Is shared with certainty

This makes it difficult to filter.

Creating Your Inner Filter

Instead of accepting or rejecting everything, ask:

- Does this align with what I understand?
- Does it suit my baby?
- Does it feel supportive or stressful?

Did You Know?

Confidence in breastfeeding improves significantly when mothers follow consistent, trusted guidance rather than multiple conflicting sources.

A Gentle Reminder

You don't need more voices.

You need the right ones.

Quick Guide: Handling Advice

- ✓ Listen respectfully
- ✓ Filter consciously
- ✓ Follow what aligns with evidence

 Avoid:

- Trying everything at once
- Letting doubt override your observations

From My Practice

A mother once said,

“Everyone is telling me something different—I don’t know what to follow.”

We simplified her approach:

- One trusted source
- One clear plan

Her confidence improved almost immediately.

Pause & Reflect

Whose advice do I trust—and why?

Affirmations

I can filter what I hear.

I trust my ability to choose wisely.

Clarity comes from consistency.

Part 5

Practical Tools — Supporting Breastfeeding

Using support tools without losing confidence

Chapter 12

Pumping — A Support Tool, Not a Measure



Using pumping wisely without letting it create pressure

For many mothers, pumping enters their journey quietly.

At first, it feels like a backup plan.

But very quickly, it can become a source of comparison, confusion, and stress.

You pump...

You look at the bottle...

And that number begins to define how you feel about your body.

Let's Reset This First

Pumping is not a test.

It is not a reflection of:

- Your ability
- Your worth
- Your supply

It is simply:

👉 A tool to support breastfeeding when needed

Why Pump Output Can Be Misleading

Pumping does not replicate breastfeeding.

What you collect depends on:

- Your comfort level
- Pump quality and fit
- Time since last feed
- Your emotional state
- Your familiarity with pumping

This is why output can vary—even in the same day.

Your Baby vs Your Pump

Your baby is biologically designed to:

- Trigger stronger hormonal responses
- Remove milk more effectively
- Adjust sucking based on flow

A pump cannot fully replicate this.

👉 Which means:

Even if pumping output seems low, your baby may still be feeding well.

Did You Know?

Many mothers with a healthy milk supply pump small amounts—this is normal and does not indicate low supply.

A Gentle Reminder

A pump collects milk.

It does not define your capacity.

When Is Pumping Actually Needed?

Pumping is helpful when:

- You are temporarily away from your baby
- You need to maintain supply during separation
- There are specific feeding challenges (under guidance)

Starting pumping without a clear purpose often creates unnecessary pressure.

Types of Pumping (Understanding Your Goal)

Before you begin, ask:

 *Why am I pumping?*

Because your approach will change based on your goal.

1. Maintenance Pumping

To maintain supply when you are away

2. Support Pumping

To assist feeding when baby is not removing milk effectively

3. Storage Pumping

To gradually build a small backup supply

Clarity reduces confusion.

How to Start Pumping (Without Overwhelm)

Keep it simple.

Step 1: Choose the right time

- After a feed (when breasts are softer)
- Or between feeds

Step 2: Start small

- 10–15 minutes
- Once or twice a day if needed

Step 3: Stay consistent

Consistency matters more than intensity

The Most Overlooked Factor: Comfort

If your body is tense, pumping becomes less effective.

Before you start:

- Sit comfortably
- Support your back
- Take a few slow breaths

During pumping:

- Avoid staring at output
- Focus on relaxing

👉 Your body responds to how you feel.



Quick Guide: Effective Pumping Basics

- ✓ Pump at similar times daily (if required)
- ✓ Use correct flange size
- ✓ Stay relaxed during sessions
- ✓ Keep expectations realistic

 Avoid:

- Comparing output with others
- Increasing frequency out of panic
- Treating pumping like a performance

Common Pumping Mistakes (Very Important)

1. Pumping too early without need

→ Creates stress, not support

2. Watching output constantly

→ Increases anxiety → reduces let-down

3. Over-pumping

→ Can lead to discomfort or oversupply

Building a Backup (Without Pressure)

You do not need a large freezer supply.

Start with:

- Small amounts
- Gradual collection
- Consistency over volume

 Enough is enough.

When Pumping Feels Frustrating

If pumping feels discouraging:

Pause and ask:

- Is my baby feeding well?
- Am I using pumping as a measure?

If your baby is thriving:

 Your supply is likely adequate.

From My Practice

A mother once came to me worried because her pumping output had reduced.

But her baby:

- Was feeding actively
- Had good diaper output
- Was gaining weight

Nothing indicated low supply.

We shifted focus from the pump to the baby.

Within days, her anxiety reduced.

Pause & Reflect

Am I using pumping as support—or as a way to judge myself?

Affirmations

I use tools to support my journey.

My baby is my best indicator.

I can keep this simple and manageable.

Chapter 13

Protecting the Breastfeeding Relationship



Maintaining connection, supply, and confidence

As your journey continues, one of the most important things to protect is not just milk supply—but the **relationship itself**.

Breastfeeding is not only about feeding.

It is about:

- Responsiveness
- Comfort
- Regulation
- Connection

And protecting this relationship often means:

👉 Keeping things simple and aligned with your goals

Avoiding Unnecessary Complexity

Many mothers feel pressured to:

- Introduce multiple methods
- Follow rigid schedules
- “Optimise” feeding

But complexity often leads to confusion.

Simplicity supports consistency.

What Strengthens Breastfeeding

The most powerful factors are:

1. Frequent direct feeding

This maintains both supply and connection

2. Responsive feeding

Feeding based on cues—not strict timing

3. Comfortable positioning

Reduces strain and improves effectiveness

When External Tools Are Introduced

Sometimes tools (like pumping) are needed.

But without clarity, they can:

- Interrupt natural rhythm
- Create dependency
- Increase doubt

This is why intention matters.

Did You Know?

Direct breastfeeding stimulates hormones more effectively than any external method.

A Gentle Reminder

The simplest approach is often the most sustainable.

Quick Guide: Protecting Your Breastfeeding Journey

- ✓ Feed directly whenever possible
- ✓ Follow your baby's cues
- ✓ Keep routines flexible
- ✓ Use tools only when needed

Avoid:

- Over-structuring feeding
- Replacing feeds unnecessarily

When You Feel Pulled in Different Directions

There may be moments when:

- Advice conflicts
- Expectations increase
- Doubt returns

In those moments, return to:

 What is working for you and your baby

From My Practice

A mother once introduced multiple changes at once because she felt she needed to “improve” feeding.

It created confusion.

We simplified everything:

- Direct feeding
- Fewer changes
- More observation

Feeding became smoother within days.

Pause & Reflect

Am I adding complexity where simplicity would help?

Affirmations

I can keep this simple.

My connection with my baby matters.

I trust what is working for us.

Part 6

Health, Sleep & Emotional Wellbeing

Supporting both baby and mother

Chapter 14

Breastfeeding and Medications



Getting the care you need—without unnecessary fear

One of the most common concerns mothers have during breastfeeding is:

“Can I take this medication safely?”

And often, the response they receive is cautious:

“Better to avoid.”

While this advice may come from a place of care, it can sometimes lead to unnecessary fear, confusion, and even delayed treatment.

Understanding the Reality

Most commonly prescribed medications are compatible with breastfeeding.

Yet many mothers:

- Delay treatment
- Stop medications abruptly
- Continue to manage discomfort silently

Not because they have to—but because they are unsure.

Why This Confusion Exists

There are two main reasons:

1. Over-cautious advice

Sometimes, breastfeeding is stopped as a precaution—without checking current evidence.

2. Lack of clear information

Mothers are often not given practical, understandable guidance about medication safety.

What Actually Matters

When a medication is prescribed, the important factors are:

- How much of the medicine passes into breast milk
- Whether that amount affects the baby
- The baby's age and overall health

In most cases, the amount that passes into breast milk is very small and not clinically significant.

Did You Know?

Many commonly prescribed medications—including several antibiotics and pain relievers—are considered safe during breastfeeding when used appropriately.

Common Situations Where Medication May Be Needed

You may need medication for:

- Pain relief after delivery
- Infections such as fever or mastitis
- Thyroid or hormonal conditions
- Mental health support

In most of these situations, breastfeeding can continue safely with the right guidance.

Why Stopping Breastfeeding Is Often Unnecessary

Stopping breastfeeding is sometimes suggested out of caution.

However, stopping suddenly can:

- Affect your milk supply
- Increase emotional stress
- Make feeding more difficult to re-establish

This is why decisions should be based on clarity—not fear.



A Gentle Reminder

Caring for your health is part of caring for your baby.

What To Do If You Are Prescribed Medication

When a medication is recommended:

- ✓ Inform your doctor that you are breastfeeding
- ✓ Ask clearly: “Is this compatible with breastfeeding?”
- ✓ Ask if safer alternatives are available if needed
- ✓ Understand the dosage and duration
- ✓ Continue feeding unless specifically advised otherwise

Timing Your Medication (When Needed)

In some cases, timing your medication can reduce the amount that reaches your baby.

For example:

- Taking medication just after a feed

This allows more time before the next feed.

This step is not always necessary, but it can be helpful in certain situations.

When to Seek Additional Guidance

It is helpful to seek more specific advice if:

- Your baby is premature
- Your baby has a medical condition
- You are prescribed long-term or multiple medications



Quick Guide: Safe Approach to Medications

- ✓ Check compatibility before stopping breastfeeding
- ✓ Follow prescribed dosage
- ✓ Monitor your baby if advised
- ✓ Seek clarification when unsure



Avoid:

- Stopping medication without guidance
- Assuming all medicines are unsafe
- Discontinuing breastfeeding unnecessarily



From My Practice

A mother was advised to stop breastfeeding while taking antibiotics.

She felt anxious and unsure.

When we reviewed her case:

- The medication was compatible
- There was no need to stop breastfeeding

With proper guidance:

- She continued feeding
- Her recovery improved
- Her stress reduced significantly

Pause & Reflect

Am I avoiding care because of fear—or because I don't have clear information?

Affirmations

I deserve safe and appropriate care.

I can ask for clear and informed guidance.

My health and my baby's wellbeing can go together.

Closing This Chapter

You do not have to choose between your health and your baby.

With the right information, you can make decisions that support both.

Breastfeeding does not require you to suffer in silence.

It requires understanding—and the confidence to seek it.

Chapter 15

Breastfeeding & Infant Sleep

Understanding what is normal—so you can rest without doubt

One of the most exhausting questions in early motherhood is:

“Why is my baby not sleeping longer?”

And often, this question comes with comparison.

What Infant Sleep Actually Looks Like

Babies are not designed to sleep like adults.

Their sleep is:

- Lighter
- Shorter
- Frequently interrupted

This is not a problem.

It is biology.

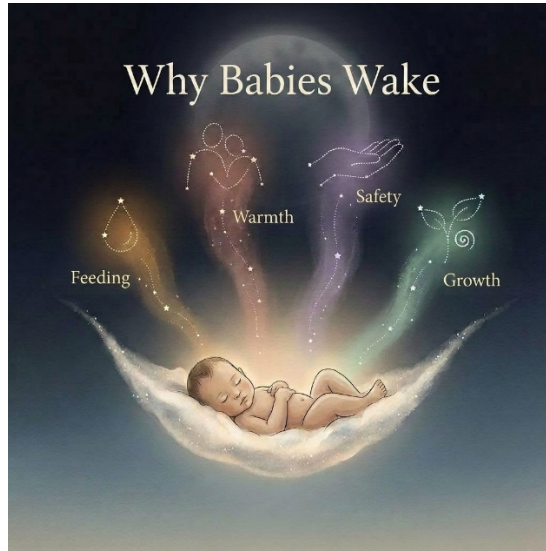
Why Babies Wake Frequently

Frequent waking helps:

- Maintain feeding
- Support growth
- Regulate body systems

It also supports:

👉 Milk supply (especially in early months)



💡 Did You Know?

Night feeds play an important role in maintaining milk production in the early months.

The Link Between Feeding and Sleep

Breastfeeding is not just nutrition.

It is:

- Comfort
- Regulation
- Connection

This is why many babies:

- Feed to sleep
- Wake to feed
- Seek closeness at night

🌿 A Gentle Reminder

Your baby is not waking to disturb you.
They are waking because they need you.

Quick Guide: What Is Normal (0–3 Months)

- ✓ Waking every 2–3 hours
- ✓ Feeding at night
- ✓ Needing help to settle
- 🚫 Not a concern unless:
 - Baby is not feeding well
 - Baby is difficult to wake

Managing Your Own Exhaustion

You may not be able to change your baby's sleep immediately.

But you can support yourself:

- Rest during the day when possible
- Accept help
- Reduce unnecessary tasks

From My Practice

A mother once felt she was doing something wrong because her baby woke frequently.

When she understood this was normal, her stress reduced.

Her baby's sleep didn't change overnight—but her experience of it did.

Pause & Reflect

Am I expecting adult sleep patterns from a newborn?

Affirmations

This phase will pass.

I can support myself through it.

I am doing enough—even when I feel tired.

Chapter 16

The Emotional Side of Breastfeeding



Holding space for everything you feel

Breastfeeding is often spoken about in practical terms.

Milk supply.

Latch.

Feeding frequency.

But for many mothers, the most intense part of breastfeeding is not physical.

It is emotional.

And these emotions are not always what you expected.

The Emotional Reality No One Fully Explains

You may have imagined feeding as:

- Calm
- Bonding
- Peaceful

And sometimes, it is.

But alongside that, you may also feel:

- Overwhelmed by how constant it is
- Tired in a way that feels deeper than sleep
- Sensitive to small challenges
- Unsure of yourself, even when things are going well

These feelings can be confusing.

Because they exist alongside love.

When Love and Exhaustion Coexist

One of the most important things to understand is this:

👉 You can love your baby deeply... and still feel overwhelmed.

These two emotions do not cancel each other out.

They often exist together.

You may:

- Hold your baby with affection
- And still wish for a moment to yourself

You may:

- Feel connected during a feed
- And still feel physically drained

This is not contradiction.

This is motherhood.

Why Breastfeeding Feels So Emotionally Intense

Breastfeeding is unique because it combines:

- Physical closeness
- Constant responsiveness
- Hormonal shifts
- Sleep disruption

Very few experiences require this level of **continuous giving**.

Your body is:

- Producing milk
- Responding hormonally
- Recovering physically

At the same time, your mind is:

- Interpreting cues
- Managing expectations
- Processing new identity

It is a lot to hold at once.



Did You Know?

Hormonal changes during breastfeeding—especially oxytocin and prolactin—can increase emotional sensitivity and responsiveness.

The Pressure to “Feel the Right Way”

Many mothers carry unspoken expectations:

- “I should enjoy this all the time”
- “I shouldn’t feel frustrated”
- “If I feel overwhelmed, something is wrong”

These expectations create silent pressure.

Because when your real experience doesn’t match them, guilt begins to grow.

Guilt: The Emotion That Builds Quietly

Guilt in breastfeeding often sounds like:

- “I should be more patient”
- “Other mothers seem to manage better”
- “Why am I finding this difficult?”

But guilt is rarely about reality.

It is about comparison and expectation.

A Gentle Reminder

Guilt does not mean you are doing something wrong.

It often means you are holding yourself to unrealistic standards.

The Impact of Constant Responsibility

Breastfeeding can feel all-consuming because:

- You are the primary source of nourishment
- Your baby depends on you frequently
- Breaks are limited

This can create a sense of:

Being constantly needed

While this can feel meaningful, it can also feel:

- Heavy
- Repetitive
- Emotionally draining

Acknowledging this does not reduce your love.

It makes space for your experience.

When Doubt Becomes a Pattern

There may be moments where:

- A feed doesn't go as expected
- Your baby is unsettled
- Someone gives conflicting advice

And suddenly, doubt becomes loud.

You may start questioning:

- Your supply
- Your decisions
- Your ability

But doubt is not a sign of failure.

It is often a sign of:

 Responsibility + care + lack of clarity

Creating Small Emotional Anchors

You don't need to solve everything at once.

Instead, build small anchors:

- One trusted source of guidance
- One calm space for feeding
- One person you can speak to honestly

These anchors reduce emotional overload.



Quick Guide: Supporting Yourself Emotionally

- ✓ Acknowledge what you feel (without judging it)
- ✓ Take short pauses—even 5 minutes
- ✓ Share honestly with someone you trust
- ✓ Reduce exposure to conflicting advice



Avoid:

- Comparing constantly
- Expecting yourself to feel one way

When It Feels Like Too Much

There may be days when everything feels heavy.

When:

- You are tired
- Feeding feels constant
- Your emotions feel close to the surface

On those days, shift your goal.

Not to fix everything.

But to:



Get through the day with support

Ask yourself:

What do I need right now—not what should I be doing?

When to Seek Support

You do not need to wait for things to become overwhelming.

Reach out if:

- You feel persistently low
- You feel disconnected

- You feel anxious most of the time
- You feel like you are not coping

Support can change how this journey feels—not just how it looks.

Did You Know?

Mothers who feel emotionally supported are more likely to continue breastfeeding and report a more positive experience.

From My Practice

A mother once told me,

“I feel like I’m not enjoying this the way I should.”

She loved her baby deeply.

But she felt:

- Constantly overwhelmed
- Guilty for not feeling “happy enough”

We didn’t change her feeding routine.

We changed her expectations.

She began to understand:

- She didn’t need to feel one way
- Her experience was valid
- She was already doing enough

Over time, her guilt reduced.

And in that space, she felt lighter.

Pause & Reflect

What am I expecting myself to feel right now?

Is that expectation realistic for this phase?

Affirmations

I can feel more than one emotion at a time.

I am allowed to need support.

I am doing enough—even when it feels hard.

Closing This Chapter

Breastfeeding is not just something you do.

It is something you experience—physically, emotionally, and mentally.

Not all of those experiences will feel easy.

But all of them are valid.

And when you allow space for your emotions,
you create space for yourself.

Part 7
Returning to Work & Continuing
Breastfeeding

Balancing real life while staying connected

Chapter 17

Going Back to Work with Confidence



Preparing your baby, your body, and your routine

Returning to work after having a baby is not just about stepping back into your role.

It is about holding two worlds together.

One where you are needed professionally.

And one where you are needed emotionally, physically, and constantly.

This transition can feel:

- Exciting
- Overwhelming
- Empowering
- Emotional

Sometimes all in the same day.

The Emotional Layer of Returning to Work

Before we talk about routines and pumping, it is important to acknowledge what many mothers feel—but don't always say:

- A sense of guilt for leaving
- A worry about how their baby will manage
- A fear that breastfeeding may become difficult

Even when returning to work is a choice you are comfortable with, these emotions can still exist.

They don't mean you are unsure.

They mean you are connected.



A Gentle Reminder

Guilt is not a sign that you are doing something wrong.

It is a sign that your bond with your baby is strong.

Preparing Your Body and Your Routine

A smooth transition does not come from doing everything perfectly.

It comes from creating familiarity.

Start preparing at least 1–2 weeks before returning:

1. Observe your baby's feeding rhythm

Notice:

- How often your baby feeds
- When they seem most settled

This helps you plan your day realistically.

2. Introduce short separations

Begin with:

- 30 minutes
- Then 1 hour

- Gradually increasing

This helps:

- Your baby adapt
- You build confidence

3. Practice pumping in a low-pressure way

Start:

- Once a day
- After a comfortable feed

The goal is not quantity.

The goal is familiarity.

Understanding How Your Day May Look

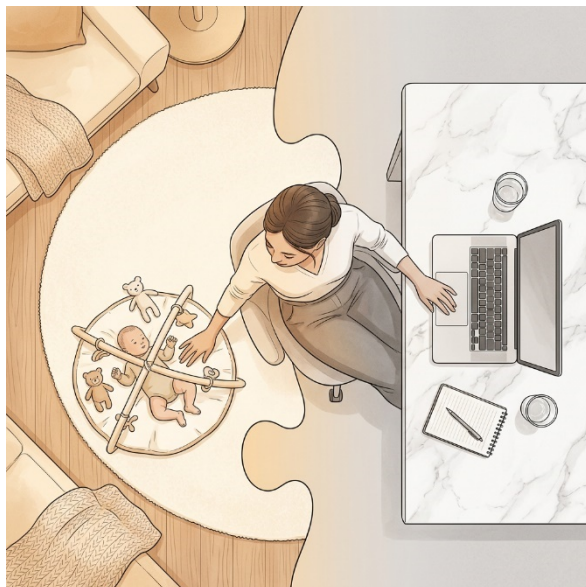
A working day does not need a rigid structure.

It needs a **repeatable rhythm**.

A simple example:

- Feed before leaving
- Pump mid-morning
- Pump mid-afternoon
- Feed after returning

This creates continuity for your body.



Quick Guide: Workday Pumping Rhythm

- ✓ Pump every 2–3 hours (if separated)
- ✓ 10–20 minutes per session
- ✓ Focus on consistency over perfection

 If a session is missed, do not panic.
Just resume your routine.

Did You Know?

Milk supply is maintained more by regular stimulation than by exact timing.

What Happens When You Reunite With Your Baby

Many mothers notice that after returning from work, their baby:

- Wants to feed more often
- Stays close
- Seeks longer contact

This is often called **reconnection feeding** (sometimes referred to as reverse feeding).

It serves two purposes:

- Emotional reconnection
- Supporting milk supply

A Gentle Reminder

Your baby is not “compensating for something lost.”

They are reconnecting with what is familiar.

Managing the First Week Back

The first week may feel:

- Slightly disorganised
- Emotionally intense
- Logistically challenging

This is normal.

Avoid trying to optimise everything immediately.

Instead:

- Keep expectations low
- Focus on what is working
- Allow flexibility

Balancing Energy, Not Just Time

Returning to work is not just about managing time.

It is about managing energy.

You may feel:

- Physically tired
- Mentally stretched
- Emotionally pulled

So instead of asking:

👉 “How do I do everything?”

Ask:

👉 “What can I simplify?”

Simple Ways to Reduce Overwhelm

- Prepare essentials the night before
- Keep feeding time uninterrupted when you are home
- Reduce unnecessary commitments
- Accept help without hesitation

From My Practice

A mother once told me,

“I feel like I need to get everything perfect before I go back.”

We simplified her approach:

- One feeding rhythm
- Two pumping sessions
- Flexible expectations

Within days, she felt more in control.

Her routine wasn't perfect—but it was sustainable.

Pause & Reflect

What part of returning to work feels most overwhelming right now?

Affirmations

I can move through this transition step by step.

I can create a rhythm that works for me.

My connection with my baby continues beyond my presence.

Chapter 18

Building a Support System



You were never meant to do this alone

As you return to work, one truth becomes very clear:

You cannot—and are not meant to—do this alone.

Breastfeeding, working, caring for a baby...

These are not individual responsibilities.

They are shared experiences.

Why Support Changes Everything

Without support, even simple things feel heavy.

With support:

- Decisions feel easier
- Transitions feel smoother
- You feel less alone

Support is not a luxury.

It is a necessity.

Understanding the Different Types of Support

Support is not just physical help.

It includes:

1. Emotional Support

Someone who listens without judgment

2. Practical Support

Someone who helps with daily tasks

3. Informational Support

Someone who gives correct guidance

Each type matters.

Expanding Your Baby's Circle Safely

Your baby can learn to feel secure with more than one caregiver.

This happens through:

- Consistency
- Familiarity
- Gentle exposure

Start small:

- Short durations
- Predictable routines
- Calm transitions

A Gentle Reminder

Your baby's attachment to you is not reduced by others caring for them. It is strengthened by consistent love.

Letting Go—Gently, Not Suddenly

One of the hardest parts of this phase is letting go of control.

You may feel:

- Things are not done exactly your way
- You need to constantly check in
- You cannot fully relax

This is normal.

Letting go is not about stepping back completely.

It is about:

 Allowing space for others to support you

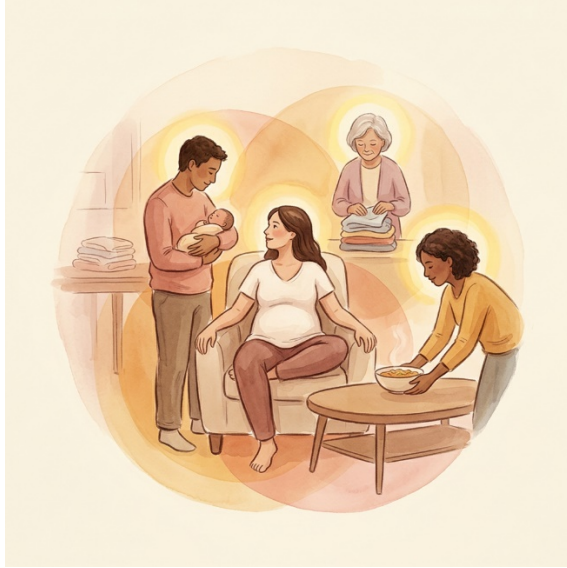
Choosing the Right Caregiver

Look for:

- Warmth
- Patience
- Responsiveness
- Willingness to follow your baby's cues

Not perfection.

A caregiver who understands your baby's signals is more valuable than one who follows rigid instructions.



Quick Guide: Setting Up Your Support System

- ✓ Clear feeding expectations
- ✓ Simple routine (not rigid)
- ✓ Open communication
- ✓ Emergency contact clarity

Creating Predictability Without Pressure

Instead of controlling every detail, create a basic structure:

- Feeding windows
- Sleep cues
- Communication check-ins

This reduces anxiety—for you and your caregiver.

Managing Your Own Thoughts

Even with support, your mind may return to:

- “Is my baby okay?”
- “Am I missing too much?”

When this happens, bring your focus back to:

👉 Evidence, not fear

- Is your baby feeding?
- Is your baby settling?
- Is your baby adapting?

💡 **Did You Know?**

Secure attachment is built through consistent, responsive care—not constant physical presence.

When Support Feels Difficult to Accept

Sometimes, the challenge is not availability of support—but allowing it.

You may feel:

- “I should manage this myself”
- “It’s easier if I just do it”

But doing everything alone leads to exhaustion—not strength.

🌿 **A Gentle Reminder**

Accepting support does not reduce your role as a mother.
It sustains it.

💬 **From My Practice**

A mother once felt anxious leaving her baby with a caregiver.

We started with:

- Short separations
- Clear communication
- Gradual increase in duration

Within weeks:

- Her baby adapted
- The caregiver felt confident

- She felt reassured
- Support didn't replace her.
It supported her.

Pause & Reflect

Where can I allow a little more support in my life right now?

Affirmations

I am allowed to receive help.
My baby can feel safe with others too.
Support strengthens my journey.

Closing Part 7

Returning to work is not about stepping away from your baby.

It is about expanding your life—while staying connected.

With preparation, support, and trust,
this transition becomes manageable.

Not perfect.
But possible.

Bonus Section

Breastfeeding Quick Start Guide

If everything feels overwhelming, come back to this.



1 — Feed 8-12x in 24 hrs

2 — Nail Positioning First



3 — Look for Swallowing
(not just sucking)

4 — Keep Baby Close
(skin-to-skin helps)



5 — Ask Early if something feels off

You don't need to know everything.
You just need to start with the basics.

Signs Your Baby Is Getting Enough



**6+ wet diapers
after day 4-5**



**Active feeding
with swallowing**



**Baby settles
after some feeds**



**Steady weight gain
over time.**

Trust these signs more than your doubts.

First 7 Days Survival Guide — The Forecast

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
						
Chaotic	Foggy	Weepy	Tender	Wobbly	Softer	Surviving

Expect turbulence:

-  Frequent feeding
-  Irregular patterns
-  Emotional ups and downs

Your survival kit:

-  Rest whenever possible
-  Keep baby close
-  Avoid comparing
-  Seek reassurance early

This phase is intense — but temporary.

Pumping Basics at a Glance

DO



Pump when you are away from your baby



Aim for consistency — not perfection



Relax your body before starting



Use correct flange size



AVOID



Judging your supply by pump output



Over-pumping out of anxiety



Pumping supports breastfeeding — it does not define it.



Support & Resources

You do not have to navigate this journey alone.

Reliable, evidence-based support can make a significant difference in how breastfeeding feels.

When to Seek Support

Reach out if:

- Feeding is painful
- Your baby is not latching well
- You feel unsure about milk supply
- You feel overwhelmed or anxious
- You simply need reassurance

👉 You do not need a “serious problem” to seek support.

Types of Support Available

Lactation Support

A trained professional can help with:

- Latch and positioning
- Milk supply concerns
- Feeding patterns

Medical Support

Consult your doctor for:

- Baby’s growth and health
- Maternal recovery
- Medication-related questions

Emotional Support

This can come from:

- A trusted friend or family member
- Support groups
- Professional counselling if needed

Reliable Information Matters

In a world full of advice, choose:

- ✓ Evidence-based guidance
- ✓ Consistent sources
- ✓ Support that feels reassuring—not confusing



A Gentle Reminder

You don't need more information.

You need the right information.

Emergency Note

Seek immediate medical help if:

- Baby is not feeding at all
- Very few or no wet diapers
- Baby is unusually lethargic
- You have fever with breast pain

Conclusion

Trusting your journey

Breastfeeding is not a straight path.

It is a journey that moves through:

- Understanding
- Adjustment
- Doubt
- Confidence

Sometimes all in the same day.

You may have moments where:

- Things feel smooth and natural
- And moments where everything feels uncertain

Both are part of this experience.

What matters is not that everything goes perfectly.

What matters is that:

- You continue to understand
- You continue to adapt
- You continue to respond

Over time, something shifts.

What once felt confusing begins to feel familiar.

What once felt overwhelming begins to feel manageable.

Not because everything changes overnight.

But because you do.

A Gentle Reminder

You don't need to have it all figured out.

You just need to keep moving forward—one step, one feed, one day at a time.

There is no single “right way” to breastfeed.

There is only:

 The way that works for you and your baby.

And that is enough.

Affirmations to Close

I have learned more than I realise.

I can trust myself and my baby.

I am doing enough.

STAY CONNECTED

I would be honoured to support you

If this book has helped you understand your journey better,
I would love to continue supporting you.

Work With Me

Every breastfeeding journey is unique.

If you would like personalised guidance, reassurance, or clarity,
you can connect with me directly.

Book a Discovery Call

-  A simple conversation to understand your situation
-  Practical guidance based on your needs
-  Support tailored to you and your baby

Website

www.arushiagrawal.com

Instagram

@lactationconsultant_arushi

A Final Note

This book is my way of supporting you from a distance.

If you need support up close,
I am here.

A Gentle Reminder

You are not alone in this journey.

And you don't have to figure it out by yourself.

