

# Beat the Breastfeeding Bullies

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Ever feel like you're being pushed around? Most of us know what it was like to be bullied when we were in school. Some of us know what it's like to be bullied at work or by people who say that they're our friends or who may be related to us. And some of us have been bullied by people who disapprove of our decision to nurse – or not to nurse – our children. Who are these breastfeeding bullies? Well, there are a few different kinds. Let's observe them in their natural habitat...

- The **Know-It-All** knows what's best for you and for your baby and has no problem telling you what you should do. If you say that you're going to try to nurse, she'll tell you that you have to nurse; you simply must for the physical and emotional well being of your child. If you say that you plan to nurse your baby for a specific length of time, she'll either tell you that it's nowhere long enough or it's way too long. And if you're hitting a rough patch in your nursing road, she'll know exactly what's wrong, tell you what to do, and blame you if the problem isn't resolved.
- The **Sniper** leaves formula coupons or articles that downplay the benefits of nursing where you'll find them. She'll make cutting little remarks like, "I wanted to nurse, but I didn't want to lose my figure" or "You're so much more earthy than I am – I could never let a baby [shudder] suck at my breast." Other snipers sometimes lurk near the formula aisle in the drugstore or grocery store and will make a snide comment as you put a can in your basket. "Tsk. Doesn't she know that breast milk is the best thing for her baby?"
- The **Fair-Weather Friend** claims to back your desire to nurse 100%, but that support changes depending on the kind of day you're having. Baby's refusing to nurse or being cranky? Rather than offering sympathy and support, this bully will proclaim that nursing is more trouble than it's worth, that you've given it your best shot, and that formula is just as good as breast milk. "If we were supposed to nurse our babies, why would we have formula?"
- The **Mother's-Milk Intolerant** may actually wince if conversation ever comes around to breastfeeding. In this day and age you don't have to be a human cow – we have breasts, after all, not teats. "Nursing is just gross."

I'm sure there are other breastfeeding bullies lurking around out there. But guess what? You don't have to listen to what they say. You don't have to do anything they tell you to do. You don't have to look at the judgmental expressions on their faces.

You are the ultimate decision maker when it comes to nourishing your baby. If you choose to nurse, that's your choice. If you choose to nurse and supplement with formula, that's your choice. If you choose to formula-feed your baby, that's your choice.

If your pediatrician gives you advice, you should certainly take it. But if the advice comes from a bully, even a bully who appears to be a friend or is a colleague or relative, just pretend that you're a duck and let it roll right off your back.

You can do it: Declare your breastfeeding – or bottlefeeding – to be a bully-free zone.

*Laurel Haring is a writer and editor. She and her family live in Delaware. Laurel has no patience for bullies, regardless of whether they're school kids, adults, or her own dogs.*

<http://www.typeamom.net/beat-the-breastfeeding-bullies.html>