

Communicating Your Feeding Decision

Written by [Laurel Haring](#) Sunday, December 14 2008 15:50

The decision to breastfeed or bottle feed your baby is a personal one. When you're delivering in the hospital, birthing center, or in your own home, make your decision known ... and make it stick.

When you've made up your mind how you plan to feed your baby, you'd think that would be that, right? Well, it's not always that easy.

“Let Me Tell You ...”

Many people have opinions about what is the “right” way to nourish babies, and some of them are quite comfortable telling you why their way is the “right” way.

I'm not going to address how to deal with those people here since I've already done it in a surprisingly popular article (see [Snappy Comebacks to Rude Breastfeeding Remarks](#)). Rather, what I want to talk about is how to make your wishes known so that when you're recovering from delivery you don't have to discuss or debate your decision.

“Please Tell Me ...”

The tide has turned, I believe, and it seems that assumptions are no longer made about what you intend to do. Often, your obstetrician or nurse midwife will ask you about what you intend to do well before your delivery date or, at the latest, once you've been admitted.

In fact, I'm willing to bet that in some labor and delivery wards, women who choose to bottle feed may be subject to some one-on-one counseling on the reasons to breastfeed, either as hospital policy or because of certain staff members' beliefs.

“I Have My Reasons ...”

Let's say you're having your second child. You tried to nurse your first and, for whatever reason, breastfeeding didn't work for you. You've decided to save yourself from going through the same heartache again and will be bottle feeding your infant. This is an emotional and personal decision, and one that you've considered carefully. It really should not be necessary for you to argue your case with anyone.

“Would You Please Make a Note ...”

Make sure that your health-care provider has made a note in your file that you plan to bottle feed. If this is a new physician, you may choose to explain the reason for your decision (and it may be a good idea in any case ... after all, she is your doctor, right?).

When you are admitted, ask that a note be placed with your admission paperwork to the effect that you have chosen to bottle feed. Again, you may or may not divulge your reasoning.

“I Need Your Help ...”

Your husband, partner, or other support person has an important role to play, and you can ask them to run interference as necessary so that you won't find yourself emotionally and physically wrung out and on the receiving end of gentle persuasion.

“I've Made the Decision That's Best for Me”

Really, all you should have to do is calmly and clearly communicate your wishes, asking that they be noted. You don't need to get angry. You don't need to become defensive. You simply need to be heard and understood. Whatever your feeding decision may be, it's yours to make.

About the Author

Laurel Haring is a writer. She lives with her family in Wilmington, Delaware, and posts semi-regularly to her blog, [Let Me Say This About That](#) . The reactions she got when she communicated her decision to nurse ranged from “that's great!” to “you'll really enjoy it” to “really?” to “ew – breastfeeding is gross.” Fortunately for her, she's not easily swayed by what others think.

<http://www.typeamom.net/communicating-your-feeding-decision.html>