

## My Breastfeeding Story

I must have been naive. As I look back on my experience being pregnant with my first, I assumed a bunch of things. I observed women breastfeeding in public. My sister-in-law would tell me stories of her experience. Her stories were of her third child but I thought it all was the same, first or third. I was wrong.

I heard that breastfeeding was fun and enjoyable. Women would say how easy it was and how you can feed your baby anywhere or anytime. It looked fast. It looked easy. It looked enjoyable. I read a little bit about it but not too much. I thought it would come naturally, as God created us to feed our babies this way.

I had my first baby at 36 weeks and he was small; 4 and a half pounds. The doctors told me to feed him every two hours. It took him about 45 minutes to eat. I was exhausted physically and emotionally within 2 weeks. I was also really nervous as I had no idea if he was getting enough to eat and growing. It was difficult for him to latch. I was learning but he was learning too. I had a nursing cover that my sister bought for me. I thought I would be able to nurse him in public quickly. It took me months before I was comfortable to nurse in public. It was not enjoyable or fun. I pushed through these thoughts and was comforted every time we went to the doctor and found out how much weight he had gained. I did not pump all that much. I think around 9 months the feedings were faster (10 min) and I was comfortable feeding in public. I breastfeed my first for 15 months as I hoped to get him through the flu season with extra immunities. Around a year was when I actually started to enjoy breastfeeding and thought it was fun.

With my second baby, who was also early and small, I started out just as physically and emotionally tired. He was put in the NICU for 5 days. I pumped a little but was called to come down every time the nurses thought he was hungry. This time I knew what to do but my baby still had to learn. I did enjoy it from the beginning as it was close bonding time. I was more comfortable feeding in public sooner.

I recently had my third child, who was a pound heavier than his brothers! I had the confidence that I needed; my baby would grow just fine with my milk. I could wait for him to tell me when he was hungry. My body produced a lot more milk and a lot faster. I pumped when I felt like I needed too and I now have a supply built up for bottles or food. I feed him in public and half the time don't even use the nursing cover. I understand some of the stories my sister-in-law shared with me. Breastfeeding is fast, fun, enjoyable, and easy...now that I have breastfeed 3 babies.

You and your baby will learn together and with time you will have confidence as well as enjoy it!

~Lauren