Supporting the Breastfeeding Mom and Baby

The support person is a valuable resource for a new mother. You can make the difference in helping her to continue to breastfeed, which will benefit all of you. You may have mixed feelings about breastfeeding, but be assured that these feelings are normal. Research shows that the time loved ones spend with their baby will build self-esteem later in life. Here are some ways that you can help, comfort and support the new mom and baby.

• Hold your baby to your chest every chance you get. Baby will hear your heartbeat and feel the closeness the two of you can share.
• Holding your baby skin-to-skin helps by giving baby a sense of warmth and security.
• Babies like a gentle but firm touch. Touch is important to growth and development. Your baby will show pleasure if he or she likes a particular touch.
• Massage your baby’s neck or back. Rock your baby gently. Play with your baby (make faces and dance with baby).
• Babies love the sound of your voice. Talk, sing, read and recite nursery rhymes to your baby. This will promote bonding between you.
• Watch your baby. Babies communicate by smiling, eye contact and reaching out.
• The younger the baby, the shorter the attention span. Watch for over-stimulation (babies may close their eyes or cry).
• Encourage mom; tell her she is doing a good job. Give positive strokes. Praise her for the special gift she alone can give to your baby.
• Help mom manage the visitors. It is often difficult telling the visitors that mom needs her rest.
• Take time off, if you can, to be there when mom and baby arrive home. Later, plan outings where the baby can come, such as movies, parks or out for a ride.
• If possible, plan time alone for you and mom around feeding schedules.
• Help with the baby so mom can take a nap in the afternoon. At night, change the diaper and bring the baby to mom for feeding.
• If there are other children, spend special time with them. Include the other children in baby’s care. Ask them how they feel about this new little person. They need to know that they are still loved.