

World Breastfeeding Week 2019 survey: Summary

EFCNI reached out to healthcare professionals and mothers with a survey, asking for experiences, advice, challenges and needs in regards to breastfeeding

Methodology:

Anonymised online survey run by EFCNI, 276 respondents, 111 parents, 165 medical experts

Insights:

46% women breastfed their baby for 6 to 12 months; 96% of these women, continued to breastfeed after 12 months and wish for more acceptance and support by friends, family and society as such when doing so.

Feedback from women*:

20% of the women found it challenging to breastfeed in their environment.

Reasons were

- Health issues of the baby 13%
- Lack of support from staff, family and friends 12%
- No facilities/rooms to withdraw to breastfeed or pump 11%

What would women need to breastfeed in everyday life?

- Rooms to withdraw for pumping and feeding (at work and in public) 29%:
- Support/acceptance from partner and society 20%
- Skilled support by a lactation consultant also after discharge 19%
- Supporting laws; reasonable length of maternity leave 16%

What was the most helpful means of support?

- Support from my partner 52%
- Exchanging with other breastfeeding women 48%
- Support from hospital staff and a lactation consultant 41%

Which role did the partner take on?

- Helping with daily household duties 73%
- Comforting the baby, also at night 68%

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How can the partner engage?

- Helping with household tasks 77%
- Comforting and checking on baby's sleep 60%
- Cleaning breastfeeding utensils 50%
- Preparing food and drinks for me 50%

* Women participating in this survey had different breastfeeding experiences, some had term born babies, others had preterm babies or babies with health problems, some have experienced both.

Experts such as lactation consultants, midwives, nurses, nutritionists, etc. gave the following feedback:

The most significant benefits of breastfeeding are

- Long-term health benefits for baby and mother 86%
- Supports bonding between mum and baby 65%
- Enormous nutritional value of breastmilk, made to fit the baby's individual needs 42%
- Very ecologic and economical 39%

The biggest challenges, breastfeeding women are facing

- Lack of skilled practical support and guidance 60%
- Pain 53%
- Problems with milk supply (too much or too little) 28%

Ways to support women with breastfeeding difficulties (most frequently cited measures)

Inform and educate during pregnancy and after birth (35%), share breastfeeding knowledge and experiences (20%), keep mothers motivated (15%), respect them and reduce pressure (11%)