

“Is it for me?” Tips for Making Your Decision about Nursing during Pregnancy and Tandem Nursing

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Like most aspects of mothering small children, tandem nursing is an adventure. Here are some tips:

Find some other tandem mamas. Hearing about a range of experiences can help you decide if tandem nursing might be for you, and a support network of tandem mamas will serve you well as you go along. One place to start is your La Leche League group. You can find local groups internationally at www.lalecheleague.org/WebIndex.html, or US groups by calling 800-LALECHE. You can also find tandem-nursing moms on the www.mothering.com message boards.

Take stock of your self-care resources: Do you have access to the nutrition, rest, and support you will need to make breastmilk, grow a baby, and enjoy your pregnancy? Breastfeeding your older child can help you make the most of couch-bound mothering--a much-needed energy-saver if you're battling pregnancy fatigue or caring for a newborn--but good self-care is essential.

Expect changes. Pregnancy has a tendency to lead to weaning, especially if nursing becomes painful or your milk supplies dwindle. Children have also been known to abruptly self-wean at the birth of the baby--or to turn around and un-wean when the milk comes in and begin nursing again like newborns. Then again, through it all, some nurslings don't skip a beat.

When considering the safety of overlapping breastfeeding with your pregnancy, a breastfeeding-friendly midwife or obstetrician can make a huge difference. We still lack sufficient medical research to make definitive guidelines, although the research we do have is encouraging for well-nourished mothers. The American Academy of Family Physicians asserts that breastfeeding during a healthy pregnancy is a personal decision for the mother--indeed, that weaning before two years of age can increase a child's risk of illness. Remember to ask yourself: Does this overlap feel harmonious within my body?

Have realistic expectations. Breastfeeding your older child can offer many gifts after a new baby joins the family, but tandem nursing can at times be stressful or difficult. Some of the variables that make the biggest difference--for instance, whether or not simultaneous nursing will work well for you--are hard to predict in advance. Above all, trust in your fundamental relationship with the older child, and not tandem nursing per se, to get you both through the shifts in your relationship.

**Hold your nursling close as you dream about your next baby,
and never doubt for a moment that you have what it takes
to make the best choices for each of you as you go along.**

You'll find more in-depth exploration of these issues in my new book, *Adventures in Tandem Nursing: Breastfeeding During Pregnancy and Beyond*, available from La Leche League International.

Resources: Nursing During Pregnancy and Tandem Nursing

Books

All of these books are listed in the LLLI Bibliography

Flower, Hilary. ADVENTURES IN TANDEM NURSING: BREASTFEEDING DURING PREGNANCY AND BEYOND. Schaumburg, IL: La Leche League International, 2003.

Bumgarner, Norma Jane. MOTHERING YOUR NURSING TODDLER, 3RD ED. Schaumburg, IL: La Leche League International, 2000.

Bengson, Diane. HOW WEANING HAPPENS. Schaumburg, IL: La Leche League International, 2000.

Hamosh M, Dewey KG, et al. *Nutrition During Lactation*. Washington, DC: Institute of Medicine, National Academy Press, 1991. This book is available online at

books.nap.edu/books/0309043913/html/ or is available free from the HRSA Information Center: www.ask.hrsa.gov/detail.cfm?id=MCHD081

King JC, Butte NF, et al. *Nutrition During Pregnancy*. Washington, DC: Institute of Medicine, National Academy Press, 1990. This book is available online at

www.nap.edu/books/0309041384/html/

Moen, Cecilia. *Breastmilk Makes My Tummy Yummy*. Sweden: Midsummer Press, 1999. This children's book shows tandem nursing: "Two can breastfeed without fuss, there is room for both of us."

At the LLLI Web site

Frequently Asked Questions: Breastfeeding during Pregnancy

www.lalecheleague.org/FAQ/bfpregnant.html

Breastfeeding during Pregnancy (Articles from NEW BEGINNINGS)

www.lalecheleague.org/NB/NBpregnancy.html

Frequently Asked Questions: Tandem Nursing

www.lalecheleague.org/FAQ/tandem.html

Tandem Nursing (Articles from NEW BEGINNINGS)

www.lalecheleague.org/NB/NBtandem.html

Flower, Hilary. Breastfeeding Agitation. LEAVEN. August-September 2003; 90-91.

www.lalecheleague.org/llleaderweb/LV/LVAugSep03p90.html

Flower, Hilary. Love, limits and tandem nursing. NEW BEGINNINGS. May-June 2003; 86-90.

www.lalecheleague.org/NB/NBMayJun03p86.html

Quigley, Lynette. Baby-led weaning--what does it mean? LEAVEN. March-April 1987; 23.

www.lalecheleague.org/llleaderweb/LV/LVMarApr87p23.html

Other Online Articles and Web sites

NursingTwo.com www.nursingtwo.com Hilary Flower's website with articles about pregnant and tandem nursing, excerpts from her book *Adventures in Tandem Nursing*, and much more!

"Nursing During Pregnancy and Tandem Nursing: The Official FAQ" www.nursingtwo.com/faq/

"Nursing During Pregnancy & Tandem Nursing" at kellymom.com www.kellymom.com/bf/tandem/

"A New Look at the Safety of Breastfeeding During Pregnancy" by Hilary Flower www.nursingtwo.com/articles/bfpregnancy_safety.html

"How Tandem Nursing Birthed Me as a Mother of Two" by Hilary Flower www.nursingtwo.com/articles/tandem_nursing_birth.html

"Pregnancy and Tandem Nursing" by Hilary Flower, from *Mothering* Issue 118, May/June 2003. www.mothering.com/12-0-0/html/12-1-0/maju-tandem-side.shtml

"Tandem Nursing: How Doula's Can Help" by Hilary Flower, from *International Doula*, Vol. 11 No. 4, Winter 2004, pp. 28-29. www.nursingtwo.com/articles/idoula-tandemnursing.pdf

Online Support

Pregnant and Nursing Message Board at ParentsPlace.com

messageboards.ivillage.com/iv-pppgbf

Extended Breastfeeding Forum at Mothering.com

mothering.com/discussions/forumdisplay.php?forumid=26

Yahoo!Groups also has email groups whose focus is on tandem nursing and nursing during pregnancy. groups.yahoo.com