

“I breastfed— from a bottle”

Meet a new generation of nursing moms. —AMY LEVIN-EPSTEIN

Like many moms-to-be, Maria Adcock, fully anticipated breastfeeding her daughter Jasmine, now 16 months. But after Adcock had an emergency Caesarean and other complications, breastfeeding didn't come as naturally as she'd hoped. When a pal mentioned that she had only pumped, “it was like a light bulb went off,” says Adcock, who went on to happily pump and feed Jasmine breast milk exclusively for 11 months. “It was like having the best of both worlds. I was able to give my child breast milk but also have some of the freedoms associated with formula feeding.”

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This mama from Long Island, New York, is among a burgeoning group of moms who are choosing to pump—exclusively. “A frequent reason for women to pump and feed breast milk instead of directly breastfeed is related to difficulties getting the baby to latch and suckle well,” says Joan Meek, M.D., editor-in-chief of *American Academy of Pediatrics New Mother's Guide to Breastfeeding*.

The pump is not an identical replacement for the breast, however. “The American Academy of Pediatrics states that direct breastfeeding is best, and expressed breast milk is next best.” One reason: Nutrients can be lost during milk storage. For example, fat and fat-soluble vitamins have a tendency to adhere to both bottles and nipples—two “middlemen” not present when a baby nurses directly on mom's



breast. “The biggest drawback is the loss of the emotional component of breastfeeding and the physiologic response of both the mother and baby to being held skin-to-skin,” says Dr. Meek.

Pumping gave Adcock the opportunity to provide her baby with many of the health benefits of breast milk, and it made it easy for other family members to feed Jasmine. “My husband could be involved in a way that would have otherwise excluded him,” says Adcock.

Of course, pumping wasn't all bliss. “You need to bring the pump wherever you go, and you feel like a cow. I went to Hawaii for my brother's wedding, and I had to pump on the plane,” she says. “During our layover, the [electrical] outlet was by a sink. I put a shawl over me, and people were staring at me like I was crazy.”

Although her family was supportive, Adcock faced a bevy of disapproval from moms who felt pumping was no substitute for actual breastfeeding. Support and advice from like-minded women came via online pumping groups. “They made me realize I wasn't alone,” says Adcock.

While pumping exclusively wasn't Adcock's initial plan, she's glad she didn't give up on breast milk altogether. “What is breastfeeding? It's giving your child milk from your breast. I was able to do that for 11 months.”

Look, ma, no hands!

We're huge fans of PumpEase, a band that fits over your nursing bra, freeing you to pump hands-free. Works with all breast pumps. (\$25-\$42; pumpease.com) For help choosing a breast pump, go to page 61.