

What is a Lactation Counselor?

A lactation counselor (breastfeeding counselor) provides people with support when they are having difficulties breastfeeding or chestfeeding their baby. Lactation counselors have received specialized training in understanding lactation and counseling skills. Lactation counselors may work with people in all sorts of different circumstances including:

- Preparation for breastfeeding or chestfeeding during pregnancy
- Supporting parents who want to tandem feed their newborn and an older child
- Helping parents to establish lactation
- Overcoming problems such as latch, supply issues, positioning, thrush, engorgement or mastitis
- Support in feeding multiples
- Support in expressing breastmilk

A lactation counselor can help you overcome problems in the early days of parenting that may enable you to continue breastfeeding for as long as you wish to. A lactation counselor, though, will not judge or pressure you to continue breastfeeding if you determine that you want to stop.

A lactation counselor will generally charge an hourly fee and will often come to your home to observe you and your baby during a feed. They will take a comprehensive history and talk to you about your feeding experience so far. Lactation counselors may also be available for telephone or email support, especially for the follow-up period after you have initially met and identified any potential problems.

Lactation counselors do not make decisions for you, or speak for you. This is your breastfeeding experience, your baby, your life! A lactation counselor supports you by providing information and explanations you may want about your choices but it's always you who decides what is best for you.