

Your Grandchild is Breastfed?

Bad news: You'll see a lot of the back of that baby's head. Breastfed newborns nurse really often. As one experienced mother said, they seem to nurse every hour on the hour... for an hour.

Good news: Since the new mother will spend so much time nursing at first, your cooking and cleaning will be a true gift of love - a needed gift that she will always remember. And when you do get to hold the baby, you'll smell only clean baby smell, even when there's a messy diaper. Breastfed babies smell good.

Bad news: If your own children weren't breastfed, you may find yourself wondering how to advise the mother in this strange new parenting style. You may see her doing things that you were told were unwise, or even unsafe, like nursing the baby without clock-watching, or sleeping with the baby. Things that we now know are good for babies. We've learned a lot in the years since your children were born.

Good news: She may be eager to share her growing experience with you. Ask to look at her books, or go with her to a La Leche League meeting. Some of the things you discover may feel surprisingly right to you. One grandmother said, "I always felt there was a piece missing with my babies. I think this was it."

Bad news: You may not have a chance to offer a bottle or cereal. Nursing mothers usually wait at least a month to offer a bottle, or may never use one, and wait for solids until about 6 months, when the baby can sit and feed himself.

Good news: This little one will probably sleep less than yours did, and will rarely be sick. An alert, healthy baby is more fun for everyone, and has more time and enthusiasm for play.

Bad news: Well, there really isn't any more bad news.

Good news: This will be a baby to brag about. Breastfed babies tend to be smart, walk early, stay healthy, feel solid, and look rosy. And even if your grandchild seems clingy at first, in time that clinginess will blossom into a secure sense of independence. This will be a child who loves going to Grandma's house! But right now, he doesn't need your help and support. His mother does. By encouraging her to enjoy her new role and helping her find the information and support she needs to make breastfeeding go smoothly, you're making a golden investment in your grandchild's future.

Now what could be better news than that?