

campaign:
feel free to feed



Many mums need help when it comes to breastfeeding and now, with the launch of the ABA national breastfeeding helpline, it comes free and easy



As breastfeeding is a learned skill, most mums need a bit of help along the way. For a mum to truly “feel free to feed” she needs access to skilled help when she needs it most. Mums around Australia can now call an Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) counsellor 24 hours a day, seven days a week, via a new 1800 breastfeeding helpline. The national 1800 number has been funded by the Commonwealth Government under the Support Breastfeeding Mums initiative.

The ABA has had state-based helplines since the 1970s, but they were local numbers and each state operated their helpline in a different way.

The new breastfeeding helpline is staffed by volunteer breastfeeding counsellors who answer calls on a roster system. When a mum calls the 1800 number, she is automatically put through to the next available counsellor.

The ABA's national breastfeeding helpline co-ordinator, Nerida May, says the technology to make the helpline work successfully was not around a few years ago. ‘What is fantastic is that although there is just one number for a mum to ring, counsellors can take the calls in their own homes anywhere in Australia,’ she says.

Mothers are already calling the helpline in droves, with over 5,000 calls each month since

it went live in January. Of the 1,100 volunteer breastfeeding counsellors nationwide, around 220 are on the helpline in any one week.

‘What many people probably don't realise is that they are not phoning a call centre, but someone at home with their family,’ May says. ‘While the breastfeeding helpline is answered 24 hours, we really appreciate only emergency calls after 11pm as our counsellors will be sleeping.’

Breastfeeding counsellors come from a variety of backgrounds and are at different stages in their lives. What they all have in common is they have breastfed at least one baby for six months or more and have undergone the ABA's training course which takes about 12 months to complete.

‘Mums can feel confident they are speaking to someone who is suitably qualified,’ explains May. ‘However, our counsellors are not medically trained so they will sometimes need to refer mums to a medical advisor such as their GP.’

Janet is a mum to five children and qualified as a breastfeeding counsellor in 2000. She lives in country New South Wales and is a full-time parent. She volunteers for three shifts per week on the helpline. ‘I'd get six to eight calls in a four-hour shift and mums ask about all sorts of things, from weaning reluctant toddlers to sore nipples, low milk supply, returning to work, night waking

and generally what's normal baby behaviour.’

Ros is mother to a four-year-old and an 18-month-old, qualified in 2008, works part-time and lives in Melbourne. She became a counsellor after having problems establishing breastfeeding. ‘I like being able to listen to where the new mums who call are at. It is also very satisfying offering suggestions that they find helpful.’ ●

To contact the ABA breastfeeding helpline call 1800 mum 2 mum (1800 686 2 686).

KEY INITIATIVES

My Child, along with campaign partners Nursingwear (nursingwear.com.au) and Mothers Direct (mothersdirect.com.au), supports the ABA in these key initiatives:

- Breastfeeding Welcome Here
- Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Accreditation
- Baby Friendly Health Initiative.

Feel Free To Feed is all about creating a supportive environment for mums to breastfeed their babies, and these ABA initiatives address that need.

See breastfeeding.asn.au for more information.

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BREASTFEEDING BASICS

We've joined forces with Nursingwear and the ABA to offer five fab prize packs each consisting of a Glamourmom tank, \$59.95, Kyraware Sleep Bra, \$42.95, and an annual ABA subscription worth \$65. Total prize value is \$167.90.

The Glamourmom tank is ideal for layering and, along with providing one-handed access and adjustable straps,

it can even replace your nursing bra. The Kyraware Sleep Bra keeps breast pads in place yet is perfect for a comfy night's sleep.

For your chance to win, go to mychildmagazine.com.au and tell us how many colours the Glamourmom extra long tank is available in on nursingwear.com.au.



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