

## The Bond Between My Daughter and I by Suhaila Ahmad

One of the main reasons that I decided to breastfeed my child was because of the benefits for the baby. Knowing that breastmilk was better for digestion, prevent colic and other health-related benefits was what motivated me. I also knew that babies on formula could develop severe constipation, and what was a mother to do if her young baby had diarrhoea (and cannot have formula)? And for me I just thought that breastfeeding is the most natural thing to do.

I read as much as I could about breastfeeding, but it was only when I actually breastfed, I learnt a lot through my own experience. There were challenges, the first few weeks was the toughest... engorgement and cracked nipples were the worst, but every problem has a solution, believe me. To expectant mothers who would like to breastfeed, ally yourself with a fellow BFM and I am sure she would be more than happy to offer advice anytime, anyday :) For me, I was very encouraged by my sister, cousin and 4 colleagues (that's a lot considering BFMs are a rare breed, I think ;) ) who all managed to breastfeed for at least a year and a half for each baby they had.

The bonuses that came as truly nice 'surprise' was the bonding - my daughter and I shared a lot of precious, lovely moments that I think only other mothers who breastfeed are privileged to know. I did not know that I would be blessed by this feeling of real closeness to my daughter, feeling really special and amazed to see my daughter grow for the first 6 months only from my breastmilk, and growing really well too! We have our funny and special moments too, like when she puts her hand inside my shirt (in public) and we would both break out into silly grins, like when she gets really excited just before milktime, gathering her pillows and bears in anticipation, and when I get to comfort her really fast when she is upset or ill with good, quiet, peaceful and private breastfeeding.

The first time I gave my daughter formula milk, she turned red like a lobster. As such I decided that I would allow her to breastfeed as much as she wanted. Now that my daughter has turned two, I am constantly thinking of weaning, but it is a real challenge because she does not like formula or the bottle.

I will go with the flow (pun intended) and I know she will wean naturally when she is ready.

For now, I am cherishing every moment I have breastfeeding her, and try to be really present when I am with her.

I wish all expectant mums successful breastfeeding, and all BFMs Happy Bonding!

Love,  
Suhaila (my name means smooth and flowing, how apt huh ;)  
and Sakinah (daughter's name means peaceful, calm and tranquil, dats how she is after mummy's milk :)

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