

Tauranga mum a winner in breastfeeding photo competition

Tauranga mum Rachel Stringfellow decided early on to breastfeed both her children and says breastfeeding is so much healthier and cheaper than using formula.



Tauranga mum of two Rachel Stringfellow breastfeeds baby Caitlynn on a day out at the Tauranga races.

"Formula is such a hassle, getting it ready, sterilising and having to remember to take it with you when you're out. Breastmilk is readily available and it's free," she says.

Rachel admits that breastfeeding isn't always easy but the cost and health benefits make it worthwhile persevering. "The more you do it, the more you get used to it," she says. "There are times

when you think about giving up but my advice is to stick with it. It helps to tell friends and family your plans so they can support you along the way."

Rachel was a runner up in the Ministry of Health's recent breastfeeding photo competition. Rachel's photo shows her feeding baby Caitlynn on a day out at Tauranga races and she says she's never had a problem breastfeeding in public.

"Sometimes you need to cover up more with a shawl or blanket but I find people are very supportive," she says.

Bay of Plenty District Health Board spokesperson and mum of two Kelly Bullen says the photo competition aimed to celebrate and support breastfeeding and in particular, breastfeeding in public.

"We're pleased so many mums showed their support for breastfeeding by entering photos. They are sending a strong message to other women that breastfeeding in public is entirely natural."

Kelly says breastfeeding gives babies a great start in life.

"It helps them develop physically and emotionally and helps build immunity. Breastmilk can give babies a perfect blend of nutrients. It's best for mum too. It reduces the risk of some breast cancers and may reduce the risk of ovarian cancer, osteoporosis and hip fractures later in life."

The winning photos can be viewed at www.breastfeedingnzphotos.org.nz.

Be prepared

Successful breastfeeding takes time, patience and practice. With a bit of planning and preparation, mums can get out and about with friends and family while continuing to exclusively breastfeed.



- Look for facilities that accommodate breastfeeding mothers ahead of time. For example family rooms in large malls and department stores are often available and investigating these during pregnancy may ease anxiety and increase confidence to get 'out-and-about' once baby is born.
- Other strategies that breastfeeding mothers find useful include using muslins and shawls to shield the breast and baby when breastfeeding in public. Giving thought (ahead of time) to the type of clothing to wear can make the practicalities of breastfeeding in public easier which is another reason why many mothers invest in maternity bras.

Source: www.breastfeeding.org.nz

Why breastfeed?

Benefits for baby

- Breastmilk is easily digested and is free, always fresh and immediately available.
- Breastmilk provides a perfect blend of nutrients and immunity.
- Breastfeeding helps baby grow and develop.
- Breastmilk helps prevent a baby getting chest infections, meningitis, ear infections and urine infections.
- A breastfed baby isn't as likely to be obese or get diabetes.

Benefits for mum

- Breastfeeding helps mothers recover faster from birth.
 - Skin-to-skin contact between mother and baby is a wonderful way to start bonding with your baby and a great boost to breastfeeding.
 - Breastfeeding reduces the risk of pre-menopausal breast cancer in mothers.
 - Breastfeeding may reduce the risk of ovarian cancer, osteoporosis and hip fractures in mothers later in life.
 - Breastfeeding uses lots of energy so can help mums to lose the weight gained through pregnancy.



More information

For more information on breastfeeding, including getting ready for when baby arrives, the different stages of breastfeeding and where to go for support, visit www.breastfeeding.org.nz.