

12 Things Grown-Ass Men Do For Their Partners Who Are Breastfeeding

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In the best of circumstances, breastfeeding is a three person job: baby (oh yeah, baby, you have to work for this, too; There's no such thing as a free lunch), nursing mother, and a dedicated partner to support her. Now that partner can be a romantic partner (husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend, other), a best friend, a mother, a lactation consultant, or any number of other special people in a mother's life. And if that partner is a man, he'd better be a grown-ass man, because there are just certain things grown-ass men do for their partners who are breastfeeding.

I mean, I know: female-bodied people are genetically predisposed to do the lion's share of the business of growing and nourishing the baby (should she choose to breastfeed, of course). So it may be tempting for the dudes in a baby's life to think "Well, I'd *like* to take an active role here, but there's literally nothing I can do." Nope. That's just not true. Are you *limited* in your ability to help? Sure. (Especially with the horrible parental leave laws in the U.S.) But that doesn't mean there isn't a bevy of things you can do to make all of this

easier on your family. Do you know who knew that without my having to tell them? Grown-ass men. And without further ado, here are some of the many things grown-ass men do when their wife/girlfriend/partner/friend is breastfeeding.

Get Her A Glass Of Water... Or 4

There's no firm consensus on how much water a breastfeeding mother needs; generally drinking to satisfy thirst is sufficient for most women. But many women will tell you that nursing makes them positively parched, especially in the early days when their supply is regulating and everyone involved is getting the hang of things. As such, grown-ass men know that their lady love will need water, lots of it, and they will lovingly prepare an icy cold glass as mama settles in for yet another 45 minute session.

Uncomplainingly Get Her Stuff While She's Trapped Under An Infant

Because did I mention *45 minute sessions*. And there are about a billion of those a day. So, *obviously* she's going to need stuff in that time, and she isn't always going to remember to grab it before she sits down. So grown-ass men do their part by getting up and getting things for them upon request, realizing that, of the two of you, they really got the easier task.

Reassure Her When She's Discouraged

There are a lot of difficulties associated with breastfeeding that can get a new mom down. And in those times of desperation and despair (or just annoyance), a grown-ass man steps up to the plate with a gentle shoulder rub and words of encouragement. Because she didn't make a baby with you just so you could get her a glass of water or fetch her cell phone for her when she left it on the counter: she likes you, and your emotional support means a lot to her.

Laugh With Her When Things Get Weird

This one time, my daughter popped off my boob, and said boob continued to shower down milk onto her face for a solid minute. It was like someone left a garden hose on. She thought it was great. Now, some people might be squeamish about that, but when you or your partner is breastfeeding, #sorrynotsorry, this is your life now. So grown-ass men know that boobs can get messy, and life with messy boobs can get messy, and sometimes it's a funny mess, so you just kinda have to join in and giggle over the fact that the boobs in your life aren't purely decorative.

Don't Be Weird About The Boobs

This will require some judgement calls, but grown-ass men are good at those. "Don't be

weird" can involve any of the following...

-don't get grossed by lactation

-don't get obsessively into the fact that your partner's boobs may be a lot bigger now

-don't constantly try to touch her boobs

Just be a grown-ass man. Be cool.

Have Conversations About Breastfeeding

This is a big part of your woman's life now, so it's normal, healthy, and probably healthy to talk about what's going on

Ask How She's Doing

Because breastfeeding takes more than just milk out of a lady. It's a huge drain on calories, physical and emotional energy, and time. That's to say nothing of the swirling inferno of hormonal changes happening beneath the surface due to pregnancy and birth. Be aware of the signs of postpartum depression; a grown-ass man does his best to let his partner know that she has a safe space to talk about her problems, no matter how trivial or severe.

Don't Assume She Is Your Child's Sole Source Of Comfort

A grown-ass man knows that just because a breastfed baby is often comforted by boobs, boobs aren't the only way to comfort a child. Grown-ass men do not therefore assume they are off the hook for middle-of-the-night wake-ups or unexplained screaming fits until the child is weaned. A grown-ass man steps up and takes turns comforting his child.

Do Some Of Your Own Research

Pick up a book on breastfeeding. Check out Kellymom.com. Talk to your partner about what she's read or learned (or wants to). A grown-ass man knows there's a lot he doesn't know and, as a gentleman and a scholar, he seeks out information.

Don't Tell Her What She Should Do

For the love of God, people. A grown-ass man knows a woman's body is her own and that there's a difference between offering support and suggestions and telling a woman what to do with her own body. A grown-ass man does not shame a woman for deciding to (or not to) breastfeed. A grown-ass man doesn't tell his partner what she's doing wrong or what she *should* be doing.

Don't Complain About Having To "Share The Boobs"

Because a grown-ass man knows that it is a privilege for a woman to "share" them with him in the first place.

Thank Her

Breastfeeding mothers are *for real* taking one for the team here. Speaking from experience, there are times, like when your child latches on to your breast for during the 15th nursing session that *evening* when you just stare blankly into the abyss and hear Simon and Garfunkel's "The Sound of Silence" play softly in the back of your mind. A grown-ass man respects this assumption of duties and shows due gratitude.