

# **Uncovering Breastfeeding Misconceptions**

### **Sahira Long, MD, Pediatrician**

For those who are reluctant to try breastfeeding, the first things I try to do is figure out why they're reluctant. There are myths that they've been passed out through their generations and upbringing. Then trying to dispel some of those myths is the first step.

### **Jamilah Ellis, Breastfeeding Educator**

There's the myth that it will affect the shape and size of your breasts, when, in fact, that's more due to, like, nature, gravity, heredity, other things. Breastfeeding doesn't have a large impact on the shape and size of your breasts. Well, one thing that I heard a lot from a lot of the moms in the community is that their partner didn't want them to breastfeed, because they wanted the breasts back. And that kind of has to do with the over-sexualization of the breasts in the American culture.

### **Letisha**

It's not your man, it's not you looking sexy, it's just you feeding your child.

### **Michelle K.**

There are a lot of misconceptions about breastfeeding. My husband wouldn't be able to participate in some of the most important beginning times. And all of those things aren't true.

### **Sahira Long, MD, Pediatrician**

One of the huge misconceptions in the African-American community is the way that you bond is through feeding. And if you take that route away because you're breastfeeding, other family members need to be taught how to help the mom, how to get a bond with the baby. And that's, you know, something that can definitely be done. I mean, I've seen it in my own family. My sons are probably, if not closer at this point, just as close to my husband as they are to me.

### **Jamilah Ellis, Breastfeeding Educator**

Other myths that exist: the baby will become overly attached to the mother if they breastfeed, when babies are naturally attached to their mother. They spent nine months growing inside your body. Who do they have a closer connection to other than their mother?

### **Patrice**

Some women don't like that attachment. They don't want to feel like they're stuck with their child all the time. I mean, I'm with my son a lot, but I mean, he's a baby, so I want to be with him. So that's not an issue for me, is that we're together all the time, because where else would he be?

### **Shauné**

We don't talk about it a lot in the African-American community. I think a lot of people have misconceptions that, I guess, it's more negative, that it's painful, it's too much of a commitment. Those are the things that I heard when I was, you know, considering and talking to other people about, you know, "Why should I breastfeed? What was your experience?" So I think it is a lot of negatives, and I wish, you know, that there were more positives out there in terms of within our community, why should we breastfeed and why it's important too.

### **Jamilah Ellis, Breastfeeding Educator**

Other things moms are concerned about: what they can or can't eat when you're breastfeeding when, in fact, you can eat just about anything you want. You have to watch your baby, of course, for sensitivities to different things, but there's no specific group of foods that you cannot eat when you're breastfeeding. And those are just the main myths that we kind of try to tackle and break down.