

Pakistan

Breastfeeding is very common in Pakistan and encouraged because of the Islamic ruling on trying your best to breastfeed the child until he or she is two. However, it's not done much in public and only done with the baby and the woman's body well covered. In social and family gatherings though, it is more usual, but again, with everything covered. The norm was to breastfeed for 18 months to two years, which declined briefly in the cities with formula milk advertised excessively and women becoming more conscious of keeping their bodies looking 'perfect'. However, it's going back to breastfeeding for the full term, i.e., two years.

-T

Indonesia

I have never seen a mother breastfeed a child in Indonesia. A new bill in Indonesia from 2008 makes a woman a criminal if you can see her breast. My wife don't care to breast feed our child. Normal culture in Indonesia is to give formula milk from first day, because many women think their breast will look bad, according to their husband.

-Bjarne

Egypt

Egyptian women can't try breastfeeding in public because of our habits, and beside this, it's forbidden as our religion tells us.

-Ahmed Moustafa

Kenya

In my country, breastfeeding is normal. In fact, a woman who doesn't breastfeed is frowned upon. The only women who don't breastfeed are usually under strict doctors orders.

Breastfeeding in public is normal. I have been raised around this and seen many women whip out a boob in public without a cover up and no one gives a second thought to it. Breasts, especially of a nursing mother, are not regarded as sexual. My entire family has been nursed. I was breastfed by mother till I was 2 years old and my aunt breastfed her baby till she was one year old.

-Sharon

France

...We live in France and although the amazing maternity leave and Working/pumping laws make extended breastfeeding easy, it's still quite RARE beyond 3 months. I have only ONCE seen another mom nursing in public here. Nobody has ever discouraged me from doing it or asked me to leave, but the French really would NEVER do anything so judgemental and prejudice (even if personally they think it's distasteful). So, the younger the baby, the more acceptable it is.

As my daughter approached 6-9 months, people did think they should offer me 'advice' about weaning and say obnoxious things like "you will stop before she's 18, right;". Now that she's a year old, even the sitter is asking me about weaning. I still pump for her at work and I found out when I returned from maternity that my modern, engineering firm with more than 600 employees has NEVER had a mom ask for a pumping room even though it's mandated by law here.

For a country that in so many ways is progressive, it's clear to me that the WOMEN are the most disapproving of breastfeeding. I've heard a lot of ignorant comments belittling the benefits and also a lot of women whose vanity (worried about getting saggy) got in the way despite understanding the benefits! ...

-Sheila

London

Breastfeeding is very rare where I live. All of my age group (teenagers) are repulsed when I say I want to breastfeed my child. My mum was and is the only one breastfeeding in our family. Extended breastfeeding is definitely a no-no and even my auntie told me it's disgusting and abnormal for toddlers to breastfeed. That prevented me from telling her that I wanted to breastfeed extendedly.

It's very rare where I am from to see young parents breastfeed amongst all races. I think only the older mums do it.

-Ms Williams

Belgium

I've seen a lot of women breastfeeding in Antwerp, Brussels. No problem in the Flemish speaking part, and I think likewise in the French-speaking part. Men tend to avoid looking at their direction (they don't want to be seen as oversexed - don't be mistaken, they are interested). But I've never seen anyone object to this. Some clothing shops, restaurants, bars, furniture shops... offer a little well equipped secluded place where you can change diapers or breastfeed as well. Just be discrete... On our beaches monokini is allowed, but only laying down. In practice this means you can sun but not run around or swim in monokini. The law dates from long ago and since allowed the number of monokinis decreased and those who want it just go along.

-DS

Brazil

I was born in Brazil, married an American man and now we live in the US. And it has been shocking for me to see how breastfeeding in America is such a taboo!

In Brazil almost all women breastfeed their babies. It's cultural. They do it mostly anywhere, and people see it naturally. Should a woman decide from the beginning NOT to breastfeed, she's likely to see plenty of puzzled faces asking her "But... why would you do that?"

Also, there are campaigns in hospitals, magazines and billboards that show a picture of a breastfeeding baby, with the message "Breastfeeding is an act of LOVE", giving incentive for women to try harder in case they find any difficulties.

-Debora K