How to Survive Breastfeeding â?? My Breastfeeding Essentials

Description

Things I wish I had known before I gave birth and which could have helped make my breastfeeding journey a less painful one.

Congratulations! Youâ??ve just given birth to an adorable and healthy little baby. Now what?

Looking back, Iâ??ve no idea why I feared childbirth and labour so much â?? those were a walk in the park compared to the breastfeeding pains I went through! No kidding. To give you an idea of how painful my journey was, I struggled with raw and sensitive nipples, BLEEDING nipples (*yes!! My PD even scolded me for feeding my baby blood which caused him to vomit on Day 2 ð??•*), engorgement, blocked ducts, milk lumps in my breasts, and more.

But the good news is, it isnâ??t as painful anymore now ð??? In hindsight, hereâ??s what I wish I knew before I started my breastfeeding journey:

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EQUIPMENT

Pack your ammo for breastfeeding into the hospital bag.

I did A LOT of research and consulted many mothers in figuring out what I ought to bring in my hospital bag, but no one ever told me to pack nipple shields and breast shells. And gosh, Iâ??ll never forget the pain I was in during my hospital stay as a result! My baby latched on well, but my nipples bled and the skin was so raw that I couldnâ??t fall asleep at night because it hurt so badly from just the hospital gown touching it. I cried till the nurses came in at 3 am for the next feeding session and unbuttoned the top of my hospital gown for me to air my nipples for recovery.

A nipple shield comes in handy if youâ??ve sore or bleeding nipples as it provides a protective layer (of silicon) between your nipple and your baby, whereas a breast shell helps to prevent your clothes from rubbing against your (already hurt) nipples. Those could have saved me from the painâ?¦if only I had known!

I remember coming home and telling my husband that I wanted to cut the tissue cardbox so that I could create a box around my nipples to prevent further chaffing by my clothesâ?¦and then my lactation consultant came to my rescue by telling me I could buy **a breast shield**. LOL!

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I also heard from my friends that if you have inverted nipples, you can also bring along a **niplette** to try to draw out your nipple for your baby to suck on.

Invest in a good hospital-grade breast pump.

Donâ??t try to save money and get a cheap pump â?? if youâ??re serious about breastfeeding, invest in a quality hospital-grade breast pump right from the start.

An electronic pump will save you a lot of energy as well â?? leave your hands free to massage your breasts for maximum milk output â?? in contrast to a manual pump where youâ??ll have to manually exert effort and press, press, pressâ?¦all for 20 minutes per boob, or even longer. Trust me, when youâ??re so tired and running on a lack of sleepâ?¦a manual pump is the last thing youâ??d want because it becomes too much of a hassle.

I personally used Spectra S1 because that was the most highly-raved and recommended by many mummies, and used in most hospitals. If itâ??s good enough for the hospital, it is good enough for me.

Use the right flange size.

Much has been written about how to gauge which is the right flange size for you, but I measured and still didnâ??t get my sizing right until a lactation consultant assessed my nipples for me and told me that my 28mm one was too big.

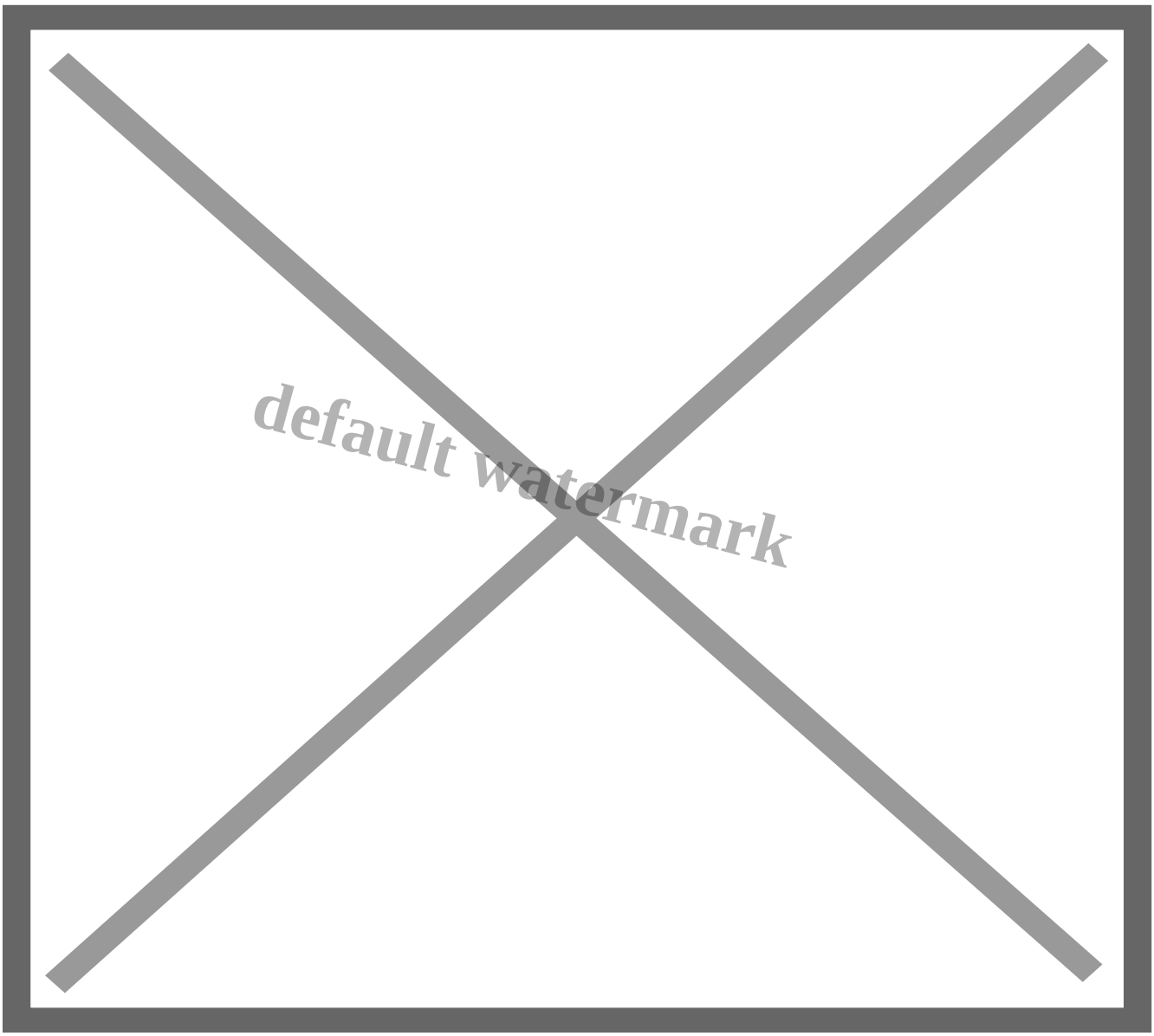
Many brands donâ??t carry flange sizes that are suitable for Asian nipples (for some reason, many of us tend to have smaller nipples) so if you need anything smaller than the usual standard sizes, try Maymom flanges instead, which are also suitable for use with many common breast pumps including Spectra and Medela.

Buy a portable breast pump.

Youâ??ll need to keep up your 3-hourly pumping even when youâ??re outside or away from your baby, but the best breast pumps are also usually heavy and bulky, so get a second breast pump for using when youâ??re out of home. Thereâ??s a wide variety of portable breast pumps to choose from so do your own research and pick what you think will work best for

you, but personally, I use the Freemie Liberty as it allows me to pump even when Iâ??m at events or in conferences.

SCHEDULE



Be prepared to live your life in 3-hourly intervals.

Welcome to the world of motherhood, where sleeping through the night now becomes a luxury as rare as a unicorn. The first few weeks of motherhood are crucial to kickstart and establish your milk supply, so you have to be diligent and pump / nurse your baby every 3 hours (or on-demand, if your milk is in low supply like mine).

I didnâ??t even have the luxury of 3-hourly intervals after my confinement nanny left, for I would fully latch my baby on during the day, and he fed almost every hour or two. It was extremely tiring and I honestly just felt like giving up because my nipples were in so much pain and I was surviving on so little sleep.

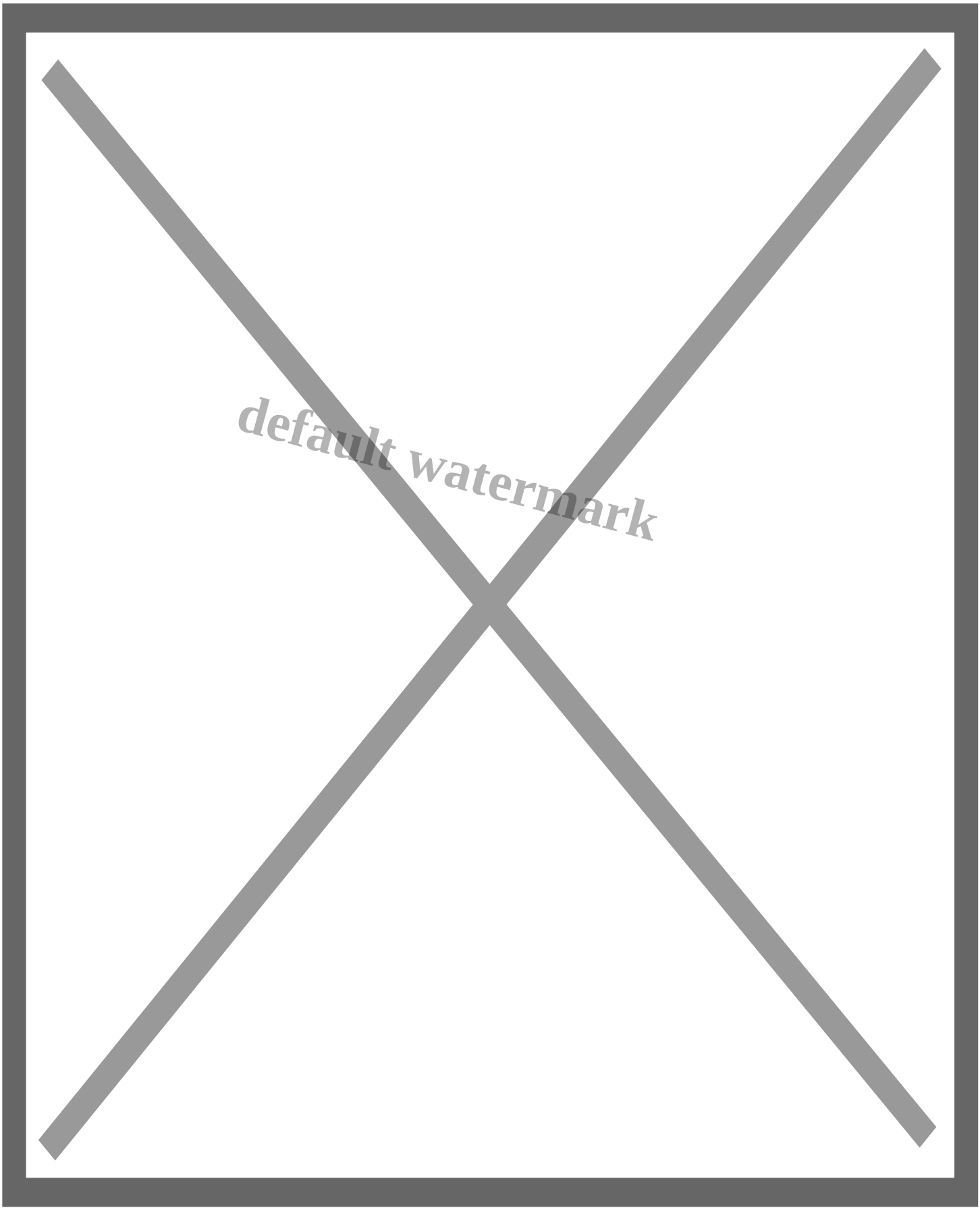
Get enough rest.

I know, it sounds difficult to get enough rest when youâ??ve to take care of a newborn baby and youâ??re stressing out about your breastmilk supply, but trust me, the rest will help you.

My milk production only kicked in on Day 4, and I never really saw any colostrum (either my baby sucked it all out, or I just never had any whenever I hand expressed). The turnaround came on Day 6 â?? where my miserable 3ml â?? 5ml of breastmilk became 20ml for the first time â?? after I slept through the night for 6 hours throughout. This is really all thanks to my confinement nanny, who insisted that I skip a pump and just sleep through for one night to try and see if it would work, and it did!

DIET & NUTRITION

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Drink lots of fluids.

I drank at least 3 litres of fluids every day while breastfeeding â?? either in the form of red date tea, soups, nursing tea, maternity milk, or water. On days where I forgot to drink enough, I found that my milk output could drop to as little as 15ml per session (half of my normal yield).

Take supplements such as Essence of Chicken regularly for energy and to boost the quality of your breastmilk.

When youâ??re surviving on so little sleep and a 3-hourly schedule, youâ??ll soon feel like a zombie. At least, I did. I took a bottle of essence of chicken every morning and it would give me the energy I needed to start my day. Iâ??ve been consuming essence of chicken regularly since primary school, but now that Iâ??m a mom, it has become even more important to my daily routine. It has also been clinically proven to help improve the quality of breastmilk with a significant increase in levels of growth proteins beneficial for babies. I personally drink my chicken essence straight from the bottle without any dilution, and then pour water into the bottle to mix with the remaining droplets so that absolutely none is wasted! Haha! Anyone else drinks chicken essence the way I do, too?

In addition, my gynae and lactation consultant recommended that I take **fenugreek supplements**, 6 tablets daily, because I was producing just 20ml â?? 30ml of milk every 3 hours. I had a few episodes of blocked ducts and lumps in my breasts, so to prevent further blocked ducts, I also took **soy lecithin** to thin out my milk and got my baby to latch on. The white spots on my nipples were often gone after 1 â?? 2 nursing sessions, and ever since I started taking lecithin supplements, they havenâ??t reappeared since then.

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I continued with my **prenatal vitamins** to ensure I was getting enough nutrients for breastmilk production, and **calcium tablets** to prevent osteoporosis in old age, as well as **fish oils (DHA)**to help aid in my babyâ??s brain development.

Nursing teas are also often recommended, although personally, they didnâ??t have any effect on me, but I kept drinking them anyway because when youâ??re desperate to boost your (already low) breastmilk supplyâ?¦youâ??ll try anything and everything.

Eat lactation cookies.

Ingredients like oats, brewerâ??s yeast and flaxseed are typically combined into bite-sized cookies to help boost your breastmilk supply and make it easy for busy mummies to pop one in your mouth to eat, all while taking care of a newborn.

Consume common foods known to boost breastmilk.

There are various milk boosters, but some of my personal favourites are: **steel-cut oats** (for breakfast), **papaya fish soup** (I order mine from Thomson Medical Centreâ??s canteen, as no one else makes it better than them), **salmon, spinach, carrots, asparagus, brown rice, almonds, cow milk** and **coconut oil.**

If youâ??re struggling in your breastfeeding journey or trying hard to build up your breastmilk supply, I hope this article of what Iâ??ve found to be essential for mine will help you as well.

Ultimately, youâ??ll need to keep trying to find what works for you as well, and most importantly, do not give up! Remember, whatever breastmilk you can produce for your baby is good enough. It doesnâ??t make you any less of a mom if you donâ??t have excess to freeze in the fridge!

***** Sponsored Message *****

This informative post was brought to you in collaboration with BRANDâ??SÂ® Essence of Chicken, which Iâ??ve been personally taking even more of ever since I gave birth.

Many of us have taken Essence of Chicken growing up, but did you know that especially for pregnant and breastfeeding mummies, Essence of Chicken actually helps to nourish both mummy and baby?

Apart from improving concentration and reducing tiredness, Essence of Chicken has been clinically proven to help enhance both quality and quantity of breastmilk. Specifically, Essence of Chicken consumption improved the quality of breast milk with a significant increase in levels of lactoferrin, epidermal growth factor (EGF) and transforming growth factor-beta2 (TGF-Î²2). Lactoferrin, EGF and TGF-Î²2 are components important for babyâ??s development and immunity.

Essence of Chicken consumption also increased the quantity of breast milk secreted by mothers, when compared to groups who consumed placebo or traditional herbal soup (Read more about it here).

Based on clinical trials, it is recommended to consume two bottles of BRANDâ??SÂ® Essence of Chicken daily to enjoy its benefits.

Keen to test it out for yourself for your pregnancy and/or confinement (I highly recommend it as I took it daily during mine, and even up till now!) to help with your breastfeeding journey? Now you can get 15% off every box of 30 bottles BRANDâ??S Essence of Chicken (Original)! Simply click here and enter promo code â??SGBUDGETBABEâ?• upon checkout at Lazada! Valid till 30 June 2019 and limited to one redemption per customer. Terms and conditions apply.

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