



#HEALTH &amp; FITNESS

# BREASTFEEDING MISCONCEPTIONS

## Debunking 7 myths, one at a time

Breastfeeding is a natural and beautiful process whereby a new mother provides nourishment to the offspring from her own body. Despite its obvious health and emotional benefits, many face challenges in this journey often in the form of criticism and myths, which make the experience seem more daunting than it needs to be. Here, we debunk some common myths to support you on your breastfeeding journey.

### Myth #1. Breastfeeding is easy

It is natural, but not necessarily simple! Even if a baby is born with reflexes to help it find the mother's breasts, many new mothers need time to perfect their positioning of the child to make sure they latch on properly. Considering that the body takes its cues to produce milk depending on how much is demanded and removed, an inability to suck properly may slow down milk production.

### Myth #2. Mothers should wash their nipples before breastfeeding

If the mother generally practices good hygiene, washing nipples should be avoided. This is because a mother has a distinct smell that a baby gets familiar with. Frequent washing can tamper with that. Moreover, nipples produce "good bacteria" which helps build the baby's immune system for life.

### Myth #3. Mothers and babies should be separated during rest time

Separating mother and child during rest time is not recommended. Unless she specifically asks for some time off, skin-to-skin contact with a mother is the best way for her to bond with the baby. According to UNICEF, practising this within an hour of childbirth and then frequently after, helps to establish breastfeeding.

New mothers are also often confused about how often they should feed their babies. While one cannot generalise as each child feeds differently, a newborn is



expected to feed between 8 to 12 times a day as breast milk is easily digested.

### Myth #4. Mothers who are breastfeeding must always eat plain, spice-less food

This is not true! A baby is exposed to its mother's food preferences from the time it is in her womb. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that they will react to her food choices through breast milk. However, if a mother perceives that her child is uncomfortable each time she eats a certain kind of food, she should consult a specialist.

### Myth #5. Mothers cannot breastfeed if they have not started at birth or if they have started formula

It is easier to breastfeed within the first hour

of motherhood as the baby's reflexes are strongest at that time. However, it is not impossible to do it later than that.

The idea is to do it as soon as possible after birth so the child gets used to the idea of feeding at the breast, rather than at a silicone teat. Similarly, it does not matter if a child needs to be given formula on certain occasions. The mother must ensure that the breast is offered from time to time so that the baby remains familiar with the mother's feed.

### Myth #6. Many mothers cannot produce enough feed

Almost all mothers can produce sufficient milk for their babies. The amount of breast milk produced depends on how effectively the baby latches onto the breast, the frequency of feedings, and how efficiently the baby can extract milk during each feeding.

### Myth #7. Mothers should not feed babies if they are sick

Untrue! A mother can often continue breastfeeding while sick, as their antibodies can help protect the baby. Breast milk contains hundreds of nutrients that adapt to the baby's needs, varying daily, with changes based on factors like temperature and growth spurts. This dynamic composition supports the baby's development and immune system.

By Munira Fidai

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# MASTERING THE ART OF FACE YOGA

## Exercises for a youthful glow

Much like traditional yoga, which benefits the whole body, face yoga is a practice that goes beyond mere cosmetic improvements, serving as a soothing ritual that alleviates stress. It offers a non-invasive alternative to Botox and plastic surgery through a series of exercises that tone facial muscles, potentially enhancing youthfulness and radiance. Seasoned yoga instructor Eliza Chowdhury, with certifications from India and Thailand, illustrates the numerous advantages and methods associated with face yoga.

### Understanding the basics

"Face yoga involves a variety of exercises specifically designed to reduce facial fat," explains Chowdhury. "While we often focus on losing body fat, many overlook the fat in their faces. Yet, it's the first thing people notice. Instead of concealing flaws with makeup, face yoga offers a permanent solution to improve your facial features like double chin, wrinkles, puffy eyes, and dark circles."

Unlike traditional yoga, which



emphasises holistic health and flexibility, face yoga focuses on the micro-muscles that often go unnoticed but play a significant role in our facial expressions and overall appearance.

Face yoga consists of specific postures and exercises that maintain the muscles of the face and neck in prime condition. "Regular practice of these exercises not only tightens the skin and smoothens wrinkles, it also enhances overall facial radiance," says Chowdhury.

Here's a breakdown of some specific exercises —

### Forehead smoothers

These exercises aim to reduce the appearance of forehead wrinkles by relaxing and toning the frontalis muscle. A popular exercise is the 'forehead freeze', where you place both hands on your forehead, spread your fingers out between your hairline and eyebrows, and gently sweep the fingers outwards while applying light pressure to tighten the skin.