

Goodwill Nursing

Written by [Laurel Haring](#) Sunday, April 20 2008 12:35

As a nursing mother, you have, whether you know it or not, become an ambassador for nursing mothers everywhere. Your success as an ambassador will be influenced by a number of factors. Are *you* a good role model? Find out about goodwill nursing!

Memorandum

To: Nursing mother

From: The rest of the world

We are thrilled that you've become a mother. There's nothing like a new baby for engendering feelings of love and hope. Congratulations!

We'd like to share a little advice with you as you embark on your career as a nursing mother that will help make the experience more pleasant for us all.

Please respect our right not to have to hear your personal, intimate conversations.

We really don't use or hear the word "nipple" in everyday conversation. Now that you're nursing, much of your experience has to do with breasts, areolas, and nipples, and that's as it should be. If we're into piercings, the word "nipple" may make an appearance. But other than those of you who are nursing or piercing, we can feel distinctly uncomfortable hearing those words. Even the term "mammary gland" can make us – and maybe you, too – a bit squeamish. Thank you for being considerate.

Please respect our right not to have to see your breasts.

Granted, the human breast is natural, as is nursing your infant. However, as much as you have the right to feed your baby, we have the right not to have to see your breasts. There are ways to feed your baby that are discreet and virtually unnoticeable to others. We'd like to suggest that you practice these techniques at home or with other nursing mothers so that you'll be able to nurse in public with skill and confidence that what you're doing is just between you and your baby.

Please respect that breastfeeding isn't for everyone.

As we said above, nothing is more natural than an infant suckling at its mother's breast. It's commendable that you've made the commitment to nourish your child this way. However, it's important that you recognize and respect that some of us are acutely uncomfortable hearing about this aspect of motherhood.

Some of us may have tried nursing our babies and, for whatever reason, weren't able to, much to our disappointment. Others of us believe that it doesn't matter how we nourish our children and that our choice to formula feed is as personal a choice for us as nursing is for you. Answering questions about nursing is fine; what is not fine is an attitude that parents who choose formula are somehow wrong. Those of us who are parents all love our children, and what's right for us may not be right for you, and visa versa.

Please understand that many of us believe that once a child is old enough to ask to nurse, that child is old enough to stop nursing.

Again, you certainly have the right to feed your children in the ways you believe is best for them and for you. And again, please recognize that many of us believe that children who walk and talk do not need to nurse. We can argue for or against our positions until the cows come home and not reach consensus – and that's OK.

Just please be aware that we may be uncomfortable with your choice to continue nursing your toddler. You have the right to nurse your child as long as you choose, but doing so in certain public settings may result in unpleasant interactions that could leave you and your child unhappy. We can't excuse the behavior of some of our more vocal members, but we are trying to explain it.

Please be aware that future generations of nursing babies and nursing mothers are looking to you to show the way.

Nursing is one of the most wonderful parts of being a mother – if you choose nursing. More people than you know will hear the words you speak and the actions you make. As a nursing mother, you are automatically a nursing ambassador. This unpaid and perhaps unintentional position can have long-reaching effects. Believe it when I tell you that you can show the world that nursing is a wonderful thing, that it can be done with discretion and respect for the feelings of others. You can be confident in your choice and welcoming when another woman comes to you for support or information.

Again, congratulations to you on the birth of your child. May your nursing experiences be happy and fulfilling.

All our best to you!

About the Author

Laurel Haring is a writer. She lives with her family in Wilmington, Delaware, and posts semi-regularly to her blog, [Let Me Say This About That](#).

<http://www.typeamom.net/goodwill-nursing.html>