

Help! My Mom or Grandma Didn't Breastfeed.

If you don't have support from your mother or grandmother, don't worry, there's plenty of help out there for you!

By Kimberly Seals Allers
Black Breastfeeding 360°

Many black women, like myself, are considered first generation breastfeeders. That is, our mothers did not breastfeed us, so we may not have the multi-generational support that is more common in the white community. And because my mother did not breastfeed, she did not know how to properly support me in my breastfeeding. Even though, I believe she was well-intentioned, she often made discouraging comments like, "Are you sure, she's getting enough?" or "Should we give her a bottle just to be sure?" and other comments that seem to underline her interest in her granddaughter's health but seriously undermine my efforts and my confidence in my efforts.

In retrospect, I think she wanted to support me, but just didn't know how.

So, if you find yourself without a mother, grandmother, auntie or Big Mama to support you during your breastfeeding journey, take heart in knowing that scores of black women, including me, have successfully breastfed anyway.

Here's what you need to know.

1. Tell your mom and others how they can support you. They really don't know how but truly love you and your baby. Offer them burping duty after you've nursed, ask them to please help by filling up your water bottle (staying hydrated is critical to milk production), or if you've stored extra breast milk, let grandma feed the baby a bottle while you nap or run errands. This experience may work wonders in making her feel included – and invested in your breastfeeding experience.

2. Get the support you need elsewhere. Since my mom wasn't much help in breastfeeding support, I attended a breastfeeding support group held at the hospital where I delivered my daughter. I often say that this support group was the saving grace of my breastfeeding experience. Especially, in the early days, knowing that I had a place and the phone numbers of other women for support was invaluable for me to keep going. Invaluable.

Join a Breastfeeding Group through the [La Leche League](#), your Hospital, your friends or search for one online in your area. There are great sites to help you, such as [meetup](#).

3. Breastfeeding Blogs: Reading through the experiences of other moms is an informative way to gain knowledge on the challenges you may face, as well as receive a boost of emotional support. Some of my favorites are: [Blacktating](#), [The Abiyamo Omo Society](#), [Black Women Do Breastfeed](#) and [The MahoganyWay](#) and [Free to Breastfeed](#). I also love [Bravado's Breastfeeding Diaries](#) blog for great resources and advice. Most of these bloggers (and myself) are eager to answer any questions you may have. There's a rich online community of support, even black support, waiting for you.

4. Twitter: Black moms are all over the twittersphere and are eager to help and quickly respond to your [Follow @bravadodesigns](#), @blackbf360, @blacktating, @blackwomendoBF and don't be afraid to ask anything. BB360 will always send you in the right direction or connect you with someone else who can provide the answer you're looking for.

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