

# Breastfeeding in Restaurants

*We hope you enjoy this inspiring story by a breastfeeding mum who shares her experiences about breastfeeding in restaurants.*

Nursingwear is committed to supporting breastfeeding mums to feel free to breastfeed in public, including venues such as restaurants. Nursingwear, leading Australian online retailer of breastfeeding clothes and nursing wear, The Australian Breastfeeding Association and My Child Magazine are running a joint campaign aimed at supporting breastfeeding mums in feeling free to breastfeed in public, aptly called FEEL FREE TO FEED.

Winning stories are published in MyChild magazine. Now you can also read selected inspiring stories online...

## Table Fed

When I am out at a restaurant or a caf  , I always feed my son at the table. I do it for my own convenience, but usually I simply do not have a choice as I have rarely seen a couch set aside or a little feeding space in the bathroom. After nine months of feeding in public I don't necessarily regard my breasts as super private anymore and although I have never experienced a negative reaction I often do sense a certain "uncomfortability" in others. It makes me wonder if it's anti-social to feed at the table.

Breastfeeding my son in public has been very eventful and has often put an awkward spotlight on us. Some moments have been pure comedy, but it leaves my company with a moral dilemma: do they ogle my boob and laugh along with me or do they prudently avert their eyes from my naked breast and leave me to laugh alone awkwardly?

When my son was just born we went to dinner at a flash restaurant for my partner's work Christmas party. It was a small group and there was nowhere to feed. I didn't want to go out to the car as it was raining so I decided to stay at the table and covered myself up with a shawl. I was still learning to get the attachment right and it was a bit of a struggle to get my top undone with one hand and get the shawl right. My partner was helping me and the fuss caused the conversation at the table to drop off completely. Then, when my baby started sucking, he put on such a show. He rooted around and bucked his head back and forth, which made the shawl fall off, and his smacking and grunting noises were so loud that I felt the whole restaurant could hear. Nobody knew where to look and at that moment I actually wished that I had braved the rain.

Again, my boob and my baby were the centre of attention at a dinner party we were hosting. It came time to feed while I was happily chatting away at the table, I let my bra cup down, and "shhhhhhh" breast milk squirted up and out like a fountain onto the table. Then, when I tried to direct it towards bubba's mouth, he started drowning in it, coughing and spluttering, trying to get a breath. Just to make the evening a tad more embarrassing for our guests, later on I was getting quite animated in an interesting conversation, meanwhile bubba has drifted off to sleep and fallen off the breast. I was blissfully unaware of my partner's urgent gestures at me to cover up my boob, which I realised had been hanging out totally exposed for quite some time.

Another time, we were out at a Thai restaurant with friends and my son was having his

dinner while I was in the middle of mine. All of a sudden, a little arm shoots out onto my plate, grabs a handful of food and brings it to his mouth to eat. My chest and boob became a smorgasbord of red curry duck and I was left laughing alone while everyone else wondered where to look.

Obviously discretion is not high on my son's priority list. His latest milk time antic is to stop mid-feed to smile at the person sitting next to him, or the person across from him, or even the person at the next table. Both my hands are full handling him and there's my boob, bare and exposed.

I feed in public with trepidation sometimes based on previous experience, but I will continue to feel free to feed because while it can feel anti-social when others feel uncomfortable, I think it would also be anti-social if I were to get up mid-conversation to search for a private corner, or to endure the tantrum if I was to leave my son waiting. So, I choose to bare the breast and laugh alone in the funny moments.

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