Only *you* have the power to give your baby the best start in life. That power is breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding is as natural as loving your baby. Yes, you may face some challenges, but give yourself two weeks of breastfeeding before you make a final decision. You’ll be happy you did.

During that time, ask for help and support. Talk with other mothers who have nursed. Call your doctor or nurse. If necessary, contact a breastfeeding specialist for help.

Also, keep in mind many of the good things about breastfeeding:

- A joyful closeness with your baby that’s unlike any other
- A natural way to comfort your baby
- Excellent nutrition that only you can provide
- No need to mix formula, sterilize bottles, or warm formula in the middle of the night
- Great cost savings
  - Formula feeding costs up to $1,500 per year
  - Fewer medical bills (see health benefits below)
- Protection for your baby and you from many health problems
  - Your baby will have a lower risk of:
    - Ear infections
    - Diarrhea
    - Heart disease, high blood pressure, and high blood cholesterol
    - Bronchitis and pneumonia
    - Asthma
  - You will have a lower risk of:
    - Allergies
    - Obesity (if breastfed for six months)
    - Type 1 or type 2 diabetes
    - Childhood leukemia and lymphoma
    - Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
    - Death from all causes

Breastfeeding is one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself and your baby. There’s nothing else like it.

**Think About It**

Check the benefits above that are most important to you. Then write down what you think might keep you from breastfeeding.

_______________________________________________________________________________________

Who or what might help you overcome those things?
_______________________________________________________________________________________