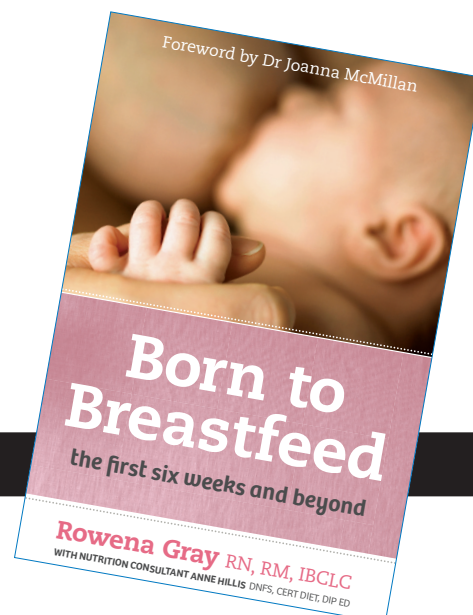




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August 11, 2015

New guide to help mums navigate the breastfeeding debate

Breastfeeding is usually presumed to be a natural mother-baby bond, yet in the context of modern-day parenting it is a subject that evokes great passion, emotion, anxiety and even guilt when this 'natural' expectation doesn't always go to plan.

To help mothers, especially new mothers, better understand and work through the many physiological and also emotional challenges that can arise, lactation consultant (and mother of three) Rowena Gray has written a comprehensive and friendly guide, **Born to Breastfeed** – in bookshops and online from this week.

Rowena decided to write **Born to Breastfeed** because of often poor accessibility to timely, appropriate breastfeeding support, and what she sees as the propagation of misleading information, especially on social media.

"The reasons why women don't continue to breastfeed long-term are multifaceted and individual, but the challenge that confronts most of my clients is the inundation of conflicting advice and their inability to separate the good from the bad; it destroys their confidence," Rowena says.

Born to Breastfeed has been written to support mothers: to explain the quite natural issues that can arise and the practical steps forward for mothers who aspire to continue to breastfeed.

The book's release comes as The World Health Organization (WHO) and Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) are encouraging mothers to continue breastfeeding for longer, where this is possible.

Current statistics from the Government's Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) show that while 96 per cent of Australian mothers commence breastfeeding, only 15 per cent exclusively breastfeed to about six months.

Rowena Gray says the decline is a concern because scientific evidence shows breastmilk is the backbone of early nutrition and a key influence on health through childhood and into adulthood.

She hopes her book will help mothers to confidently continue breastfeeding.

"A major fallacy is the belief that mums should impose a routine and this can lead to misinterpretation of normal newborn behaviour and ultimately, feeding problems," she says. "The 'art' of reading baby cues is being lost."

Rowena says another significant obstacle is the "overwhelming acceptance that formula is a good enough alternative to breastmilk".

"Breastmilk is a living tissue that is impossible to replicate," she says. "Its nutrient structure, digestibility, and capacity to change composition according to baby's growth and development needs are reasons to breastfeed for as long as possible. Breastmilk also reduces the risk of allergy, and contains antibodies that protect babies against infection."

However, while babies instinctively know how to breastfeed, Rowena says breastfeeding is a learned skill for mothers.

"Insufficient supply and postnatal depression can make breastfeeding very difficult, and sometimes it is not recommended for medical reasons, but most women *can* breastfeed and most breastfeeding challenges – including attachment difficulties, sore nipples and low milk supply – *can* be overcome," she says.

"When mothers understand what is happening and why it is happening, they feel better able to work towards a potential solution."



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Written from the baby's perspective, **Born to Breastfeed** draws on evidence-based research and midwifery practices to explain how mothers can respond to baby's actions and needs. It draws on up-to-date facts and strategies to help solve breastfeeding problems, dispelling misinformation about breastfeeding and infant feeding in general.

Leading dietitian and nutritionist Dr Joanna McMillan, who will launch **Born to Breastfeed** at The Wheeler Centre in Melbourne this Friday (August 14), predicted it would "fast become the feeding bible for new mums".

"Women give many reasons for ceasing breastfeeding, but the majority of obstacles can be overcome and with more information and understanding we can promote a shift in attitudes to better support longer breastfeeding practices," Dr McMillan said. "This is not about judging women and their choices; this is about empowering women to make informed decisions.

"Not only does **Born to Breastfeed** expertly explain the science and physiology of breastfeeding, outlining the many benefits, it packs in all of the practical information a new mum needs to know. Every conceivable problem or worry is covered."

Born to Breastfeed also includes dietary recommendations from the author's mother, nutrition consultant and author Anne Hillis.

Born to Breastfeed – the first six weeks and beyond

By Rowena Gray RN, RM, IBCLC and Anne Hillis DNFS, CERT DIET, DIP ED

Foreword by Dr Joanna McMillan

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Dr Joanna McMillan and the authors are available for media interviews.

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To download high-res images of Dr Joanna McMillan, Rowena Gray and Anne Hillis,

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