

# MUM'S CHOICE

**Beccy Ashe, 35, from Liverpool, will continue to breastfeed her son for as long as he likes!**

**P**anting away, I took a deep breath as the midwife passed me my baby girl.

I gave birth to Daisy on 8 July 2013, weighing 6lb 8oz, and she was perfect.

Holding her to my chest, I waited anxiously.

Only, almost immediately, she latched on.

'Wow, she's latched perfectly already,' the midwife smiled.

It was such a relief.

As soon as my partner Mike, 35, and I found out we were expecting, I knew I wanted to breastfeed if I could.

My mum Elly, 56, had nursed me and my siblings, and it always seemed like the preferable option.

As I fed Daisy from my breast, it felt amazing to know that I was giving her everything she needed in my liquid gold – comfort, nutrition, pain relief and immunity support.

I've always been amazed at what the female body can do.

However, I won't pretend that I wasn't nervous about breastfeeding in public.

As a new mum, to begin with when we were out in public, I would find a near-by feeding room or stick to cafés where I knew the staff.

I wasn't embarrassed, but for some reason, there is a stigma around breastfeeding.

However, when Daisy was a few weeks old, my mum and I were out shopping with her when suddenly, she started screaming from hunger.

Beginning to panic, I knew I needed to find somewhere to feed her.

'Let's go,' I told Mum.

Daisy was clearly distressed, and I was

becoming the same.

Only, it was then when Mum stepped in.

'Just feed her here,' she calmly told me.

Looking around, we were in the middle of the street, but Daisy was in such a state.

And so, picking her up, I lifted my top and held her to my breast.

Immediately, she latched on and stopped crying.

I breathed a sigh of relief.

And I quickly realised that no one was looking.

Walking whilst feeding Daisy, I knew then that I had nothing to worry about.

Breastfeeding was normal and if Daisy was hungry, she needed to be fed.

And so, from that day onwards, I started feeding her wherever and whenever.

Breastfeeding in public can be discreet. Most people don't even realise.

After all, I'm hardly sat there stark naked.

And when I started nursing more confidently out and about, I realised how many other women did, too.

I'd never noticed before.

Most people don't.

And the longer I did it, the



*It brings them comfort*



*My focus is my children*



*I breastfed on my wedding day*



**BREAK THE STIGMA**

more groups I found offering information and support.

I was in touch with other mums who were breastfeeding, and there were so many welcoming groups.

As the months passed, I became more confident.

The NHS states that from six-months-old, you can begin to introduce solids into your child's diet, alongside either breastmilk or formula.

However, as the milestone approached, it was a no brainer for me that I would continue to breastfeed.

So, as well as allowing her to naturally wean onto solids, we carried on as usual.

The World Health Organisation's advice was to breastfeed until at least two years and beyond, so that's what I did.

Then she got to three...

As Daisy grew, she wasn't nursing as often.

Now on solids, she rarely needed it.

However, whenever she

wanted it, I would allow her.

Most of the time, it was when she was tired or needed comforting.

This often meant we were at home, but even when we weren't, I would still make sure to feed her.

I even did so on our wedding day in April 2016 when she was three-years-old.

Although most parents may choose to stop once their child is two, I simply didn't want to. And neither did Daisy.

For me, I wanted to let Daisy naturally wean herself off.

I didn't want to say yes one day and no the next.

If she wanted my milk, she could have it and if she didn't, then that was fine.

Then, on 23 August 2017, we welcomed our son Tobias, now four, into the world.

Just like Daisy, he took almost instantly.

By the time he was born, Daisy was hardly feeding.

Only, watching me with Tobias, she got the taste for it again. She didn't want to miss

out on anything.

And so, I fed them both at the same time.

With Daisy on one breast and Tobias on the other, it was a truly magical feeling.

When it comes to breastfeeding, Daisy and Tobias are very different.

Daisy was very needy and could sometimes latch for hours, however Tobias is on and off as soon as he is done.

Breastfeeding was the most magical experience and I wanted to make the most of it while I could.

Any location you can think of, I fed – airplanes, beaches, supermarkets, the floors, parks and more.

I've never faced any negativity when breastfeeding, but I've never looked for it.

My focus is my children. I don't care what others think.

Whilst I will feed them anywhere and everywhere, as they got older, I would ask them to wait until we could find somewhere comfortable.

It's important to teach them that it's my body and I decide what I do with it.

Over time, Daisy naturally stopped breastfeeding.

Although there was an initial

period after

Tobias was born where she was a little jealous, it naturally calmed down.

By the time she was five, she was going weeks without any – only asking when she was low.

She was in school, and was beginning to come into her own. It was a natural time for her to begin to wean off.

'Do you really need it anymore?' I asked her one day.

'No, Mummy,' she replied, before running off.

And so, that was that. From that day onwards, I was officially only feeding Tobias.

He's now four, and typically feeds around three or four times a day.

After a long day at nursery, it's nice when we get to have a bit of quiet time and reconnect.

Mike wants what's best for all of us and as long as we're happy, he is.

Although I always knew I wanted to breastfeed, I never imagined I would gain such a passion for it.

That's why, I absolutely adore working with the breastfeeding support service,

Liverpool Bambis.

They are a council run service who provide support and guidance for new and expecting mums.

We want parents to consider all of their options and be as informed as they possibly can.

I understand that formula is sometimes the best and only option for many parents, but a

lot of breastfeeding problems can be easily fixed with the right advice, support and guidance.

The biggest problem with breastfeeding is the stigma around it.

In modern society, breasts have been hugely sexualised, when the reality is, they are there to feed our children.

No one should be ashamed of doing so.

If it makes someone feel uncomfortable, then that's on them. Not you.

I find it so empowering that I have been able to grow two babies and sustain them all from my body.

I will keep feeding Tobias for as long as he wants.

Children naturally wean themselves, and I know he will,

but until then, I'll do what my body is designed to do.

Feed him.

People can think what they like.

And I want more mothers to know that it's OK.

As part of Liverpool Bambis, we run weekly community groups where mums and babies can get together and discuss any issues they have.

Breastfeeding offers so many wonderful benefits for both you and your baby.

And thanks to modern science, if you are struggling, you can find a way to suit you.

From donor milk to Supplemental Nursing Systems, there are options out there if you want to consider them.

Whilst I understand that formula is best for many, I've been lucky that it's never had to be on the cards.

Plus, breastfeeding is totally free!

There are a lot of societal pressures, and all that matters is that our babies are happy, healthy and loved.

Looking back, I struggled to begin with.

I was nervous and worried about what others thought, but now I know I don't have to be.

Many mums struggle, and if you are, find help. There's plenty out there.

And don't be ashamed to ask questions.

So many women have told me that I've helped them on their journey, and I can't tell you how amazing that is.

I never thought I'd still be breastfeeding Tobias, but he still wants it.

Every morning and night, he comes to me for a feed.

I'm not going to neglect him of that.

If he chooses to keep taking until he's six or above, I'll do so!

Daisy, now eight, naturally weaned herself off, and I'm sure he will, too.

My bond with my children is so strong and I truly believe that breastfeeding has played a role in that.

People may find it strange that I still nurse a toddler, but I don't care.

The female body is amazing, and I'm proud to celebrate it.