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## New mothers should seek help from professionals if they want to breastfeed

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I am writing refer to the article by Vanessa Yung ("Before babies hit the bottle", February 26).

Many mothers in Hong Kong experience difficulties with breastfeeding, and even though most of them try to breastfeed in hospital after giving birth, most fail to continue. The article rightly mentions a number of obstacles. But how about those who are successful, how can they do it?

In my years of counselling mothers (as a certified lactation consultant), I have seen many cases of successful breastfeeding. There are full-time mothers, working mothers and those who work part-time who are all breastfeeding. Those who have to work will pump their milk during separation and nurse when they are back home.

These successful mothers have common traits.

First of all, they are determined and they never gave up.

They did their homework before giving birth to learn more about breastfeeding and so they were knowledgeable. They attended classes, joined meetings and talked to other breastfeeding mothers so they could understand real-life situations.

Also, whenever they faced challenges they asked for help.

Breastfeeding problems can often be fixed if you ask for help from experienced counsellors or professionals. There are volunteers who are willing to help and lactation consultants who are professionals.

I would like to stress the importance of learning breastfeeding and getting well prepared before birth. In Hong Kong, bottle-feeding dominates and the breastfeeding culture is weak, so how can new mothers be expected to know how to breastfeed and look after a breastfed baby if they never see anyone doing it?

How many times do readers see a mother breastfeeding in Hong Kong?

New mothers should learn from reliable sources and get to know breastfeeding mothers.

They should avoid breastfeeding seminars run by formula companies, which lure mothers with free gifts. Not only is that against the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, their purpose is to get women to bottle-feed.

Before we can get more maternity leave, nursing rooms, and better support, it is up to mothers to improve the breastfeeding rate. If they are determined they can make a change.

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