



Breastfeeding at the Pool

Sometimes mums are told not to breastfeed at public pools, either due to public disapproval or concerns about council rules on bodily fluids. However, asking a mum not to breastfeed for these reasons is discrimination.

1

Breastmilk is safe around pools

- Breastmilk does not pose any health risk to other swimmers.
- Pools are treated with chlorine to kill any germs that might enter the water.
- Breastfeeding mums can swim even if their breasts leak milk

2

Vomiting concerns

- Babies aren't more likely to vomit while breastfeeding than at other times.
- Mums whose babies vomit frequently are usually aware and take steps to prevent it wherever they go.
- Chlorine keeps the pool water clean.

3

'No Eating'

- Pools often have a rule against eating or drinking in the water. However, breastfeeding isn't the same.
- Breastmilk doesn't contaminate the pool like other food and drink might.
- Breastfeeding is not just feeding, it also comforts the baby and a baby can't predict when they'll need to be fed.

Here are some helpful tips to handle complaints about breastfeeding:

1. **Stay calm and polite:** Listen to the person's concern without judgement or showing frustrations.
2. **Explain the law:** Politely let them know that breastfeeding is a natural and legal right protected by Australia law, including in public spaces.
3. **Support the mother:** If the mum hears the complaint, reassure the mother that she is welcome to breastfeed and does not need to move or cover up.
4. **Provide education:** Kindly explain that breastfeeding is normal and the pool supports all families.
5. **De-escalate the situation if necessary:** Lead by example and show that your pool is a friendly and inclusive space by treating all visitors with respect. Here are some helpful phrases to respond to:

The person making the complaint:

- 'I do hear you, but we are a family-friendly pool and we make sure all parents feel welcomed, including breastfeeding mothers'.
- 'Breastfeeding is totally normal, and mums are allowed to breastfeed anywhere, including here at the pool'.
- 'It's actually against the law to ask a mum to stop breastfeeding or cover up'.
- 'I know it might not be something you're used to, but there isn't anything wrong with breastfeeding in public and we can't ask the mum to stop here'.
- 'We really want everyone to feel welcome at the pool and that includes breastfeeding mums. I hope you can understand'.
- 'Thanks for letting me know, but mums are welcome to breastfeed here. Let's make sure everyone has a good time'.

When speaking to the mum:

- 'You're absolutely fine to breastfeed here. We're a family-friendly pool'.
- 'You're fine to breastfeed, don't worry about anything. This is a safe and welcoming space for you'.



Australian law protects a mother's right to breastfeed in public under the **Sex Discrimination Act 1984**. This law makes it illegal to treat breastfeeding mums unfairly or to restrict their right to feed their babies in public spaces, including swimming pools.



More information
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