

Before Lleu was born I knew I wanted to breastfeed. I had advice that it would be hard and this was encouragement for me. I also need to travel to New Zealand with a little baby as my brother was getting married there and I knew that breastfeeding would make the journey much easier.

Lleu was born naturally, and I could see straight away that he was ready to feed. One of the staff in the hospital helped to latch him on me as I recovered from the birth. I don't remember feeling any pain, only that it was a very different experience! We had to stay in hospital for six days. I am convinced that this was extremely valuable for me as I learnt to breastfeed with all the help there.

Lleu spent 24 hours on the special unit ward. The staff there would call Llifon ward when he needed to feed if I had gone to Llifon to rest. I am thankful that I was still in hospital when my milk came in as feeding became much more difficult during this time. My breasts were full and hard which meant that Lleu bit down on me as he was feeding. During this time Lleu gave me sores as clamped down on me trying to feed.

After I came home feeding was a mixed experience. Sometimes feeding was fine and other times it was very painful. I remember being in tears thinking about feeding during my first week at home.

By the time we were meant to be travelling to New Zealand, Lleu was 4 weeks old and gaining weight well. I received treatment for Thrush which did help some of the pain. By now the feeding process was alright, although I was in pain for the first minute of feeds. I also still had to cover my breasts when I was in the shower!

During our first week in New Zealand I could see how convenient it was to travel with a small baby and breastfeeding. Lleu was fed in very special places; aeroplane, distant beach, rugby games, and a wedding. By now the sore on my left breast was much better and therefore I knew that feeding could be painless. By around six weeks of feeding I could have a shower feeling "normal"! It wasn't until two weeks later that feeding was completely pain-free on both sides.

By now I love to feed. It is a completely different experience from the first painful few weeks and the pain is a distant memory. My favourite time with Lleu is lying down to feed him to sleep at night. I love the closeness between the both of us during this time.

These are a few things which helped me with feeding:

1. Feed! Feed! Feed! I know, this is the last thing I wanted to hear when I was in pain. But by feeding more I was less full and therefore the process of feeding was easier for Lleu and eventually less painful for me.
2. Ask for help. I am extremely thankful for my husband and members of my family which supported me in different ways. From encouragement

to feed and coming over to feed me! I sent my cousin a text in the middle of the night asking “please tell me this will get better” and she would reply reminding me that it wasn't supposed to hurt.

3. Knowing that it was something to learn. Feeding was something that the both of us had to learn to do. I enjoyed reading tips and trying different techniques to see what worked for me.

I'm glad that I was warned that feeding would be difficult but it has been worth every second. I am the eldest of 5 children and my mother breastfed all of us. A year before Llew was born my mother died. She has been the constant inspiration for me as Llew and I have learnt how to feed.