

**Dirty looks, dirty
bathrooms. Every credible
medical organization
recommends nursing.
So why are women who
breastfeed in public
made to feel as if they're
doing something wrong?**



Babies don't have scheduled mealtimes—especially newborns. To find out what really happens when you leave the house (and your comfy glider, pretty pillows, and privacy), we went to Atlanta to spend a day with Anna Hartman, 26, and her 3-month-old son, Josiah.

By Sharon Estroff Photographs by Stephani Stephens



8:35 A.M.

Anna stops for a quick latte, and Josiah wants a little pick-me-up too. She heads for the nice bench, but someone has already claimed it as a cigarette-break spot. Smoking and nursing is not a healthy combo, and there are no tables inside, so Anna takes her hungry—and about-to-scream—baby into the ladies’ room (see sad picture at left).



9:22 A.M.

Oh, sweet relief. Anna’s weekly “Mommy and Me” pilates is one of the few places where she can go about her business without worrying about a stray nipple sighting or feeling like a stripper at a kiddie party. Take your time, baby! Who knows where you’ll be having your next meal?

Nursing by the numbers

73

Percentage of moms who try to breastfeed.

6

Number of months the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that women breastfeed.

17

Percentage of moms who make it to the one-year mark.

29

Percentage of women who say they’d be uncomfortable nursing in public.

0

Number of federal laws that protect the rights of breastfeeding mothers.

75

Percentage of mothers the U.S. government hopes will nurse at birth by 2010.



11:24 A.M.

While adults mostly avert their eyes, kids love to watch Anna nurse Josiah. This little girl wants the answer to the following question: "Why is that baby biting your nickel (aka nipple)?" Anna says she's gotten used to it—and even kinda likes answering the queries.



12:20 P.M.

Quick shop stop—Josiah's hungry again. Anna doesn't want to hike back to the car, so she finds a discreet spot on the floor. Since the whole place is filled with moms and kids, she wonders why the store doesn't provide a nursing area with actual chairs.



3:35 P.M.

Anna and her husband, Noah, hook up for an afternoon of errands. On a break he gets to witness a new nursing low when a teenager snaps a picture of the feeding session with his cell phone. "Oh, dear God, please don't let me end up on a MySpace page!" thinks Anna.



5:35 P.M.

Early dinner. Strangers look on disapprovingly while Anna discreetly nurses. Until she had a baby, she never thought of herself as an activist, let alone a lactivist, but now she sometimes finds herself staring right back: Hello, I'm just feeding my baby!

Breastfeeding Confessions

After pumping in an airplane bathroom, I dropped the milk on the man sitting next to me.

Caitlin Blasdell, 39

Mother to: Will, 7; James, 4; and Sam, 14 months

Lives in: Pleasantville, New York



I have my nanny drive my baby to my job, then I run out and clandestinely nurse him in the car.

Laurie Albanos, 35

Mother to: Jamie, 9; Riley, 6; and Josh, 3 months

Lives in: Alpharetta, Georgia





→ **1:58 P.M.**

At a swanky shoe store, the nice owner—a grandpa, actually—insists that Anna and Josiah make themselves comfortable on the couch. But the Ladies Who Shop are less than thrilled. Does anyone ever get used to the dreaded N.I.P.* glare? **Nursing in Public*



→ **8:12 P.M.**

Home. Finally a feeding without fear of showing skin. Anna's wiped and wishes the world could be a little more hospitable to a breastfeeding mom who's just trying to do what's best for her baby. Is there really a reason that nursing in public has to suck?

You have the right to remain... breastfeeding.

Most states have some kind of law on the books ensuring a mom's right to nurse in public. But even if your state isn't in the group, breastfeeding is still perfectly legal. To get more info, go to lalecheleague.org.

You have the right to use a bottle.

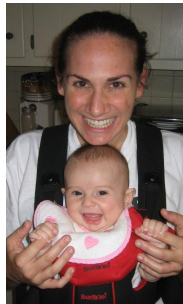
Sometimes a mom who can't nurse or chooses not to can find herself on the receiving end of some withering looks as well. No worries: Your bottle-fed baby is going to grow up perfectly healthy.

You have the right to decide.

There should be no shame in anyone's game. So let's all stop the judging, okay?

Sometimes I'm so busy I feed my daughter while I'm going to the bathroom.

Emily Blumberg, 30
Mother to: Ellie, 4 months
Lives in: Westford, Massachusetts



When I was having lunch with my boss, breast milk leaked through my shirt.

Nancy Harris, 30
Mother to: Alexa, 1 year, and Zoe, 3 years
Lives in: Rockville, Maryland

