

Media Release

From: Jill Stringer

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Subject: Nana nurtures breastfeeding

Edna Flutey has four grandchildren under one year old living with her, and knows just how important it is for their mums to have support from friends and family – especially when it comes to breastfeeding. Edna was unable to breastfeed her own children when they were babies, mainly due to lack of encouragement and advice. Now she's providing practical support and encouragement to her daughter Maria, so that Maria can breastfeed her new baby, George.

"First of all she needs to eat right," Edna says of Maria. "My children like to eat takeaways, but Maria's got to eat healthy. I've been doing the shopping so I get her the right foods."

Having her mum – and also her sister, help with the shopping, housework and cooking has meant that Maria has been able to focus on getting breastfeeding established. "Rosie Johnson, one of the midwives at the hospital, was the one that got me onto breastfeeding. She gave me heaps of advice and showed me how to get the latch right and all that. She encouraged me to not give up when it was hard at first. I was worried about coming home – that I might give up without her help. But my Mum and Nana helped by looking after Mercy (Maria's 11 month old daughter) so I could just look after George. My nana helped with the latching and that too – cracked nipples meant that sometimes I hesitated to put him on, but getting the latch right sorted that out."

"At one point I was so sore that I just wanted to give him a bottle, but Mum just kept telling me that had to try, that I could do it," Maria says. Edna knew that Maria really wanted to breastfeed and helped her keep her resolve by not having formula in the house. "It's simple. If I didn't buy the tin of milk, then she had to feed him herself."

Maria says that Jean Kawana from the Family Start team at Whaiora Whanui has also been a great support. "Jean's been with our family for about six years. She's been here every day and she always answers your questions or helps out. Sometimes she just comes in for a coffee, but it's good to know she'll be here."

With the encouragement of her friends and family, Maria has persisted with breastfeeding and says it just gets easier and easier. "Now I love it," she says. "It's free, it's easy access and I don't have to go far at night. I was so over making bottles for Mercy. I hated getting up at night to make one and it's a hassle with all the cleaning and getting it warm and all that."

Now that George is a few weeks old, Maria has been getting out and about a bit, and is finding ways around her shyness at breastfeeding in public. "It's a confidence thing, really," she says. "Nobody likes putting it out there in public, but I have to get used to it – and others have to get used to it too I guess. It's sad I reckon, how it's such a natural thing but we still feel shy about it. I use a blanket to put over him when he's feeding and that works okay."

Edna is much more direct. “You’ve just got to get on with it and do your thing,” she says. “At the end of the day it’s the best thing for baby. It’s also a lot cheaper than buying those tins of milk and a lot less hassle for everyone.”

Ends.

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Attached: photo of Maria with Mercy and George.

