

A new book entitled "Lactivism: How Feminists and Fundamentalists, Hippies and Yuppies, and Physicians and Politicians Made Breastfeeding Big Business and Bad Policy " by Courtney Jung is getting a lot of air play and media attention.

La Leche League Canada offers the following comment:

In her book Ms. Jung asserts that encouragement to breastfeed has reached a "moral fervor" inconsistent with the true value of breastfeeding. La Leche League International (of which La Leche League Canada is an affiliated organization) was among the first to recognize the important health and emotional qualities of breastfeeding. When our organization began nearly sixty years ago, most babies were not breastfed. Research over the past sixty years has shown not breastfeeding has definite health risks and consequences and **breastfeeding is now clearly understood to be the normal way to feed a human baby.**

This deepening understanding of the importance and value of human milk for human babies from an immunological, physiological, and psychological standpoint is a result of an ever-increasing, vast, and incontrovertible body of research. Even though occasional studies refute or question certain specific qualities, the world's scientists and health organizations have concluded that, overall, research definitively proves (and continues to prove) that breastfeeding is essential for infant and maternal health. Understanding and valuing strong scientific evidence is not morality. It is rational, logical, and essential to any society that seeks to optimize its citizens' health and wellbeing.

Research has provided strong evidence that getting breastfeeding off to a good start with skin-to-skin contact and early and frequent feedings in the immediate postpartum period provides the foundation for a robust milk supply going forward. Providing expectant parents with access to fact based information about breastfeeding and human milk, and a supportive community (medical professionals, lactation specialists and peer supporters like La Leche League Canada) allows them to consider and set their own breastfeeding goals.

It is unlikely there is any pressure in our society that could force intelligent women to do something for their children that doesn't make sense. Mothers simply want to breastfeed because they want the best health for their children and themselves. We are hormonally driven and biologically hard-wired to breastfeed and be breastfed. We're mammals. Lactation and breastfeeding are the biologically normal states for human mothers who have given birth and human milk is the biologically normal food for human babies.

For more information about breastfeeding and La Leche League Canada please visit our website LLL.ca