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A new analysis has found that **mothers** who are more **extroverted** and **less anxious** are **more likely** to **breastfeed**

and to continue to breastfeed than mothers who are introverted or anxious. Published early online in the [\*Journal of Advanced Nursing\*](#)

, the study indicates that new mothers with certain personalities may need additional support and education to help them feel confident, self assured, and knowledgeable about breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding is important for the health of both mother and baby: breastfed babies have lower levels of infections and allergies and are less likely to be overweight, while

mothers who breastfeed are less likely to develop certain cancers.

Many factors can affect whether a mother breastfeeds, but mothers who have lots of support, feel confident, and know how to overcome problems are more likely to breastfeed for longer. Understanding what makes a mother feel confident and supported is important to

increasing breastfeeding rates. Many studies have looked at the role of mothers' education, age, and relationships, but the link between breastfeeding and a mother's personality has not been explored.

To investigate, Amy Brown, PhD, of Swansea University in

the United Kingdom, surveyed 602 mothers with infants aged six to 12 months old. The questionnaire examined the mothers' personalities, how long they breastfed, and their attitudes and experiences of breastfeeding. Data

were collected between March and June 2009.

Mothers who indicated that they were extroverts and were emotionally stable were

significantly more likely to initiate and continue breastfeeding for a longer duration. Mothers who were introverted or anxious were more likely to use formula

milk or only  
breastfeed for a  
short while.

Dr. Brown  
believes that the  
findings can be

explained by the link between mothers' personalities and their attitudes and experiences of breastfeeding. Mothers who



were introverted  
felt more  
self-conscious  
about  
breastfeeding in  
front of others  
and were more  
likely to formula

feed because  
other people  
wanted them to.  
Meanwhile  
mothers who  
were anxious  
found  
breastfeeding

was more difficult and felt that they couldn't get the support they needed. These factors are known to be linked to low

breastfeeding  
rates.

“The important  
message from  
the findings is

that some  
mothers may  
face more  
challenges with  
breastfeeding  
based on their  
wider

personality.  
Although they  
may want to  
breastfeed,  
more  
introverted or  
anxious

mothers may  
need further  
support in  
boosting their  
confidence and  
learning about  
how to solve

problems, and  
they may need  
encouragemen  
t to make sure  
they access  
the  
breastfeeding



support  
services that  
are available,”  
said. Dr.  
Brown.

## Personality May Affect a New Mother's Decision to Breastfeed

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