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be at home, rather than on the prowl in search of a mate. (Vasopressin is also known as the monogamy hormone, fostering commitment.) Oxytocin is also produced in men and women during loving contact. Because of this it has been called "the hormone of love" by experts such as Dr. Michel Odent, Sheila Kitzinger and Dr. Sarah Buckley. It is also a necessary hormone for a mother's body to produce in order to ensure a successful pregnancy and labor, and it plays a role in breastfeeding, as well. Since couples are already in the habit of producing oxytocin during intimacy, fathers can contribute this dimension of their relationship to the mother's labor and breastfeeding time.

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## The Importance of Father Love

Consequently, father love, added as an ingredient to the scientific recipe of mother's labor and breastfeeding, can be a useful enhancement. The result of this increased hormonal activity is that bonding, attachment, protection, love, loyalty, commitment and caring are all enhanced in new fathers. Science shows us that a father with close, strong, intimate contact during pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding will be supported by Mother Nature during his early engagement in the family. This then establishes a more durable foundation for a lifelong loving relationship between father and child, and indeed, for the family itself.

While nutrition is an important part of the breastfeeding equation, it is hardly the only component. Perhaps the biggest misconception is that some form of artificial milk, or even bottlefeeding breastmilk, can actually replicate breastfeeding.

A mother's breastmilk is specific to her baby and adapts to her baby's ever-changing needs hourly, daily, and even monthly or yearly. These needs are physical, mental, emotional, social and developmental. If food comes from a bottle instead of a breast, many of these crucial components are hindered or lost. In addition, as Veronika Robinson says in her book, *The Drinks Are on Me*, Breastfeeding is a sacred art. It opens our soul and brings us to a place which connects generations past with future generations.

For the majority of mothers, a significant key to her successful pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding is the quality of care she receives from the father. When the father cares for the mother, he is most certainly caring for his child as well. What is the potential for a father's contribution to his family, and what benefits might he derive, during this intimate time between a





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