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SUNDAY
GAZETTE-MAIL
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Life & Style

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THEY LEAD VERY DIFFERENT LIVES.

CaCoe Manley is a 39-year-old college student with three kids and a brand new baby. Amanda Hager, 30, mothers two boys while her husband works in Charleston. Rachel Jeffers, 28, pumped her milk at work for months to take home for her baby. Samantha Lane, 27, quit her waitress job because the manager wouldn't let her do the same. Erica Mason, 25, works as a breastfeeding counselor for the Kanawha County WIC program. Maggie Sammons, 35, left her grade-school counselor job to stay home with her baby.

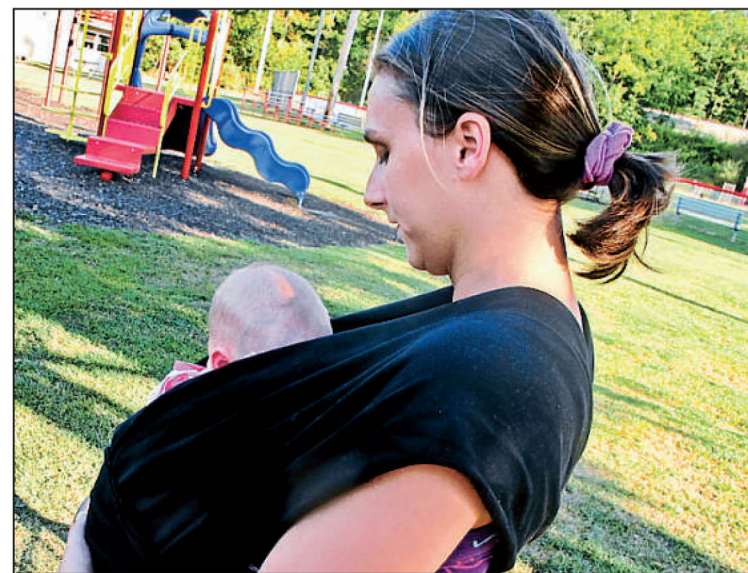
All six say their first few weeks of breastfeeding were tough and exhausting, then it got a lot easier. All say their children are not overweight and almost never sick. The American Academy of Pediatrics would not be surprised. Breastfeeding lowers the mother's breast cancer risk and her children's risk of many medical problems, the AAP says: obesity, bronchitis, pneumonia, allergies, asthma, colds and infections, leukemia, sudden infant death syndrome, among others. The mothers agreed to give readers a glimpse of this little-discussed part of human experience.

THE SHAPE WE'RE IN

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MOTHERS' CHOICE

Six local moms share the benefits of breastfeeding



After Rachel Jeffers, 28, of Charleston, went back to work full-time at Humana Inc., she pumped milk at work so she could keep nursing her baby

By **Kate Long**
Staff writer

A WOMAN has to nurse her baby or pump her milk or it will dry up. After I went back to work, I pumped every few hours, till he was about 12 months. I thought about where I could pump before I asked [to do it]. They said OK and were really supportive. I appreciate that. It doesn't happen at every job," Jeffers said.

"It wasn't a big deal. My pump is hands-free, so I could bring my laptop in the room, close the door and continue working while I pumped. Every day, I brought a cooler bag with four bottles to work. When I got home, I stuck the full bottles in the fridge for the babysitter to feed him the next day.

"Breastfeeding burns 500 calories per day. Some mothers use it to lose weight. I ate 500 calories more.

"Lucas is 17 months now, and he's eating a variety of foods. Overall, nursing has been great. It creates a special bond. If he bumps his head, he runs to me and wants to nurse. It's a comfort thing.

"But the first few weeks were rough. When babies are born, their stomachs are really small, so they want to eat all the time. Lucas wanted to nurse round the clock. I wasn't prepared for that. I was the only one who could feed him, so for a few weeks, I never got a break. One session might last 45 minutes, then I'd have an hour break, then he'd be wanting to nurse again.

SEE **JEFFERS, 8F**

Logan County native Amanda Hager, 32, researched breastfeeding on the Web so she'd know what to expect

PEOPLE think a new mom and baby automatically know how to breastfeed, like magic. It doesn't work that way. My first baby had problems latching onto me. I had lots of milk, so that problem could have been solved in the hospital if there'd been someone to help me.

"When I got home, my grandma told me, 'Well, just stick him on there!' My pediatrician said, 'He's not getting enough food. Give him a bottle.' My mom breastfed me, but she died before I had my first baby, so I couldn't ask her for advice.

"People my age take whatever their pediatrician says as the word of God. But doctors don't always tell you the whole story. They don't always say, 'Let me tell you all the good things you and your baby could get

from breastfeeding.'

"I didn't know how to shift him around so he'd latch, so I got scared and put him on formula. I regret that now. He missed the immunities. He gets a lot of colds and earaches, a lot more than my second one.

"The second time I got pregnant, I did tons of Internet research. A lot of Twitter friends breastfeed, and they gave me advice. By the time the lactation consultant saw me in the hospital, I was completing her sentences.

"Cormac's 9 months old now, and he's never once been sick. He wore me out nursing the first few weeks, but I expected it, so it was OK. Since then, he's been easy.

"After the first weeks, it's much easier than sterilizing and washing baby bottles and buying formula. I've got his food

SEE **HAGER, 8F**

Samantha Lane, 27, of Teays Valley, recently quit a job because her boss wouldn't let her pump milk on her break for baby Aubrey

TEAYS VALLEY mother Samantha Lane, 27, recently quit a waitress job because the management wouldn't

let her pump milk on her break. She is helping raise a blended family of five kids. "I truly love the process of breastfeeding, the closeness of it, the bonding time. Aubrey's four months now, and she'll probably be my last child, so it saddens me to think that I'll never do this again. There's nothing like the feeling of sitting quietly in a chair nursing, knowing you're giving your child the absolute best, that it's flowing from you to her.

"My first baby didn't latch at first. The nurses kept saying, 'We can always give him a bottle. Here, try this bottle. We'll

put it on the nightstand in case you want it.' I finally gave up and fed him the bottle because I thought, well, I guess I can't breastfeed.

"It's good they're getting nurses to quit doing that. I was just 17 and I didn't have patience. I thought something was wrong with me. But I was determined to breastfeed my next child. I'd read about the immunities and brain development and all, and I wanted him to have that. So I nursed him till he was 14 months.

"But it was too late for my first son. He's 10 now. For years, he was sick, bad colds, serious stomach problems. My second child has been sick maybe five times in his whole life, mostly colds. I can't prove it, but I think

SEE **LANE, 8F**

CONTINUED FROM 1F

Breastfeeding mothers, in their own words ...



Erica Mason's mother, Annette Mason (right) nursed her, and Erica breastfed her daughter Jazmin

ERICA Mason, 25, of Charleston, is a WIC breastfeeding counselor for Valley Health in six counties.

Back when I was nursing my daughter, I didn't have a car, so I carried her with me everywhere. I got so good at breastfeeding in public, sometimes people wouldn't even know I had a baby.

"I kept her completely covered in my Moby wrap, strapped to my body so my hands were free. I could even shop while I was nursing her. When she got hungry, I'd adjust her to where she needed to be, and I'd be walking down the middle of the mall, shopping bags in either hand, nursing away. Nobody had a clue.

"Older women noticed sometimes. That's all. Us breastfeeding moms, we're so modest and discreet, sometimes I think it keeps people from getting used to it. They don't know a breastfeeding mom just walked past them.

"Comparatively few black women breastfeed. I've thought about that a lot, because we have health problems it could help with.

"It's not a simple question. Years and years ago, in slavery

days, a lot of African women had to nurse babies for their masters. A stigma got attached to it. And people think it's what people beneath you do, that you're poor and powerless if you breastfeed. Generation after generation, those ideas get engrained until we can't really say what's going on.

"My mother's family couldn't understand why she wanted to breastfeed me. They said if she wanted to know about breastfeeding, to go ask the hippies. She read books and called the LaLeche League.

"As a coach, I try to help mothers look clearly at the pluses. I try to dispel myths they may have heard. But it is a very emotional decision, with a lot mixed into it. Sometimes fathers don't want the woman breastfeeding, the 'that's my playground' kind of thing.

"These days, educated women with money are most likely to breastfeed, but people still have the idea that if you breastfeed, it means you don't have the money to afford formula.

"It's generational. If my mother had gone along with her family, she would have taught me to bottlefeed. A lot of young mothers, all they've seen is bottles, and nobody's ever told them there's a difference."



At 39, CaCoe Manley is studying forensics at West Virginia Tech, while daughter Kiara, 5, attends kindergarten

AT 39, CaCoe Manley is studying forensics at West Virginia Tech, while daughter Kiara, 5, attends kindergarten.

CaCoe Manley of Spring Hill had her fourth baby last week, on Sept. 25.

"My mom was a nurse. She breastfed me a few weeks, then quit when she went back to work. Back then, they didn't let women pump milk on the job at all, so when my mom went back, she pretty much had to give up breastfeeding.

"That's starting to change. I'm 39, and I breastfed my first three kids. With the new baby, I'm more aware of how it benefits me, the mother. It lowers my breast and ovarian cancer risk. I'll lose weight faster. Breastfeeding uses up calories. "It's comfortable and easy for

me. I'm glad to doing it again. It's hard to describe the closeness you get with your baby, physically and emotionally. I think it's made them closer to me when they got older, too.

"I'm a student at West Virginia Tech now. I plan to find a private place to pump milk at school and put it in bottles for the baby. A mother needs to be relaxed for her milk to drop.

"I think more people are getting used to it. They're realizing it's good for babies.

"I went back to school so I could get a better job and salary. It's now or never. I was at Mountain State University, but I'll finish up at Tech.

"I watch what I eat while I breastfeed. I want my milk to be as good as it can be for my kids. They're hardly ever sick. I like to think I helped give them that."

JEFFERS

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"Breastfed babies eat small amounts on their own schedule, so they don't get overfed. People who are used to bottle feeding may get concerned when they see the baby eat-

ing so often at first. They may think there's something wrong or think you're not making enough milk. But it's normal.

"Once or twice, late at night, I thought about a formula bottle, but I resisted. The coach at Women and Children's said it would get a lot better within weeks, and it did."

Need help? Try this!

Useful sources recommended by moms and coaches.

Online:

- YouTube: Search "breastfeeding help."
- Twitter: Use hashtag #bfcafe for advice and conversation with other breastfeeding moms and lactation consultants
- www.theleakyboob.com, and twitter account, @TheLeakyBoob
- www.babycenter.com
- www.kellymom.com — A top-rated go-to site, very mom-friendly.
- www.breastfeeding.com — Click on "nursing video."
- www.laLecheLeague.org — Good selection of forums.
- www.aabaonline.com - African-American Breastfeeding Alliance.
- www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding — Government site, great advice.
- www.thebump.com — Go to "newborn and baby," then "feeding baby."
- www.notmilk.com/101.html — 101 Reasons to Breastfeed
- Calculate the cost of formula vs. breast milk: <http://kellymom.com/pregnancy/bf-prep/bfcostbenefits>
- Text4baby: Free daily tips through your cell phone to help you through pregnancy and baby's first year. Sponsored by the National Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition. See www.text4baby.org for information.

Programs:

- Right from the Start: Breastfeeding coaching and help with practical problems that affect children: transportation, feeding, housing, etc. <http://www.wvdhhr.org/rfts> or 1-800-642-8522.
- Women Infants and Children (WIC) program: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic> Certified breastfeeding coaches. Also help with bottle feeding, baby food and child care in general.
- LaLeche League: 304-610-5839. Help for women of any income. West Virginia meeting schedule: <http://llwv.org/breastfeeding-help/west-virginia>
- Women and Children's Hospital Outpatient Breastfeeding Services: 304-388-2180. Advice and consultation with board-certified lactation consultants.

Books:

- "The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding," Diane Weissinger, Diana West, Teresa Pittman.
- "Breastfeeding Made Simple," Nancy Mohrbacher, Kathleen Kendall-Tackett.



Maggie Sammons, 30, left her job as a Charleston grade school guidance counselor to be a full-time mom

"I WAS BREASTFED, so I never thought of doing anything else. That's what I knew. He had latching problems at first, but my mom was there, saying, 'Well, let's try a pillow here or prop him up this way and see how it works.' So I was lucky. Women used to do that for each other all the time.

"I'm not trying to make a point with breastfeeding. I just decided it's best for my kids. Sometimes mothers who bottle feed get defensive. When I say I breastfeed, they'll start justifying bottle feeding, and I'm thinking, 'Hey, I didn't say anything against it.'

"I usually say, 'Well, that was your choice, and this was mine' and try to leave it at that. I don't want to argue.

"I want my baby — and myself — to have the health benefits. I love doing it too. It's our quiet time together. It's so soothing.

"It's not as hard as some young mothers fear. My first one, I was stressed about feeding him in public, though I always covered up. With my second one, it's not that way. I'm usually with friends, and I'll say, 'I hope you don't mind, but I'm going to nurse now.' I don't say, 'Do you mind?' because I'm going to do it. When he's hungry, I feed him.

"Maybe people are getting used to this. I've never had negative reactions. Sometimes I do get little approving nods, often from a woman, like she's saying, 'Good for you!'"

Reach Kate Long
at katelong@wvgazette.com
or 304-343-1884.

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LANE

FROM PAGE 1F

breastfeeding made him healthier. I feel bad about that.

"When I nursed my second child, I worked for CAMC housekeeping, and they let me pump milk every four hours or so. So when I started my waitress training, I asked about pumping for my 5-month-old. The woman trainer said 'We can probably work that out.' But once I

started, the manager said, 'Don't even ask about it.'

"I quit. I'll find another job. "My sister got me breastfeeding. I saw how easy she had it, no bottles, no formula. When her first baby wouldn't latch, she pumped milk for him to give him the immunities till he latched.

"Breastfeeding's easier after you get going. At night, you don't have to get up. We keep her in a bassinet by the bed, and I pull her into bed with me, nurse her and feel close, then put her back. It's a sweet time."

HAGER

FROM PAGE 1F

supply right with me.

"I feed him when we're out, but don't get in people's faces. The other day, in Target, he was hungry, so I put a hood

up on his baby carrier and fed him. Only twice I've had people say, 'Don't you want to go to the bathroom and do that?' I want to ask, 'Do you eat in the bathroom?' but that would be rude, and it's a chance to educate them. So I'll say, 'I'm just feeding my baby, and this is the best thing for him.'"

DID YOU KNOW?

BREASTFEEDING LOWERS THE RISK OF ...

- obesity
- pneumonia
- bronchitis
- throat infections
- respiratory infections
- Type 1 diabetes
- intestinal infections
- dermatitis and eczema
- middle ear infections
- asthma
- leukemia
- SIDS
- colds

This information provided by
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As part of the ongoing series
THE SHAPE WE'RE IN
An in-depth look at obesity in WV.

Illustration by: www.illustration.com

KYLE SLAGLE | Sunday Gazette-Mail

Help spread the word about the benefits of breastfeeding. Find this poster online at <http://bit.ly/Vpq1Wj>.

20% from each pair of Courage Sunglasses will be donated to Susan G. Komen for the Cure!

Quantities are limited!

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