

Breast Feeding (BF):

Benefits for the baby: Breast milk supplies antibodies to the baby to help decrease infections in the baby including fewer ear infections and episodes of pneumonia, decreased infections of the bowel in premature babies, breast milk supports the healthy bacteria in the baby's gut. Babies who breast feed have a lower risk of childhood obesity and diabetes, decreased incidence of SIDS, fewer childhood cancers, asthma and atopic dermatitis (skin rashes).

Benefits for you: helps with weight loss and decreases the risk of breast cancer. It is cheaper!!!

During pregnancy, your breasts prepare for lactation (milk production) and after birth, hormonal changes and infant sucking trigger a surge in milk supply. One of the best ways to improve your chance to breast feed is doing skin to skin with the baby right after delivery and breast feed within the first hour. The baby will give you clues that they are ready to breast feed. For the first few days your baby will get colostrums. Colostrums is produced in small quantities but is rich in antibodies, helps clear meconium and satisfies your baby's thirst and hunger. Over the next 2-4 days the colostrums will transition into milk. In this early stage, the baby really doesn't need very much; remember the baby's stomach is smaller than your thumbnail!

Frequency of nursing is a little different for all babies; most newborns need to nurse 8-12 times in a 24 hour period. The more you nurse the more milk you will produce. Most mothers eventually find that nursing for 10-20 minutes on each breast should empty the breasts and provide proper nutrition and fluids for your infant.

Please prepare for breast feeding before you deliver. You will hear many different recommendations about how to be successful with BF. If you listen to everything, you will be confused and frustrated. The reason why there are so many opinions is that even though breast feeding is a natural process it is a skill that must be practiced and learned by both mother and baby. Once BF is established between mom and baby, most women find it easy, convenient and a wonderful way to bond with their baby.

There are many excellent resources for BF: friends or family that have been successful, the lactation consultant in the hospital that will help you with the basics of breast feeding, especially positioning of the baby and latching on (they will give you information and ways to reach them), and the La Leche league (there are good resources on their website). Several books that may be helpful include, "The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding" by the La Leche League and "Breastfeeding Made Simple: Seven Natural Laws for Nursing Mothers" by Nancy Mohrbacher and "The Breastfeeding Mother's Guide to Making More Milk" by Diana West. There is good information on the American Academy of Pediatrics website as well. **Please read before the baby gets here** and ask your doctor questions. Other sources for support: US Dept of Health 800-994-9662, La Leche League 800-525-3243.

It is recommended that infants be exclusively breastfed for the first 6 months (up to one year with adding solids at 6 months) to provide optimal nutrition and protection against infections. When you are breastfeeding, it is important to continue eating a well-balanced diet. It is a good idea to continue your prenatal vitamins (PNV + DHA) while BF, as well as drinking a lot of fluids (64 ounces a day). Your pediatrician may recommend supplements for the baby such as vitamin D or iron.

Common Concerns When Breast Feeding:

1. Sore nipples and engorgement are common in the early stages of breast-feeding and is one of the most frequent causes for new mothers to quit breast-feeding. Proper positioning and latching with frequent nursing can help fix these uncomfortable symptoms and avoid recurrence. Call the lactation consultants for advice if you are having problems. Make sure you meet with them before you leave the hospital. You can use lanolin (over the counter) or hydrogels or Newman's nipple cream (a prescription) for sore, cracking nipples.

2. Am I making enough milk? This is another common reason why moms quit breast feeding. It is normal for the baby to lose 7-10% of its body weight, typically regains in the first 10-14 days of life. If your baby is not losing more than that and having 6-8 wet diapers and 3-5 bowel movements within a 24 hour period you can be assured that your baby is getting enough milk. It may take 8-12 weeks to truly establish a good supply with a good pattern of breast feeding and that is a long time when you are tired. A common time to see a drop in supply is when women go back to work or when women start using the pump.

3. There is controversy on when to start using the pump. The best evidence suggests that early use of the pump will decrease successful breast feeding. However there are good reasons to use it, such as baby in the NICU, problems with latching due to previous breast surgeries. However, careful work with the lactation consultant in the hospital can fix the majority of issues before needing to use a pump.

4. There is controversy on using pacifiers, there is evidence that using pacifiers before 3 weeks may negatively affect the baby's ability to nurse, therefore it is best not to use them before 3 weeks.

5. There is also controversy on nipple shields (try to avoid using in the first 24 hours of life but if it is recommended, goal is short term use until latch with the baby improves). Another "extra" is supplemental milk system. The best way to establish nursing is with the baby and the mother with as few extras as possible. At the beginning, nursing is time consuming even without any extras. However, in a few women who have inverted nipples or milk supply is coming in very slowly, these extras may be helpful. I recommend seeking the advice of a lactation specialist if you are experiencing any of these problems. **Remember, try to avoid anything extra that adds to your stress and doesn't really obviously help.**

Common problems after you go home:

Engorgement - both breasts are warm, full and painful, try to avoid because being engorged may slow or decrease milk supply and make it difficult for the baby to latch, treatments: if difficulty latching - release some milk by hand expression so the nipple is softer and easier to latch on, increase frequency of breast feeding, especially in the first couple weeks, cool compresses after feeding

Mastitis - one area of one breast - hot, red, swollen, painful, you may have a fever and body aches and flu-like symptoms, the symptoms can come on fast, treatment: antibiotics (please call the office if you have these symptoms), continue BF, moist heat may help, Tylenol or ibuprofen will lower your fever and help the pain

Plugged duct - treatment: feed affected side first, warm compresses or hot water in the shower and massage before BF and cold compress after breastfeeding

Sore nipples - need better positioning and better latch, Hydrogel pads, lanolin, expressed breast milk on nipples, hand express to soften areola, consider nipple shield - after evaluation by lactation consultant

Yeast infections- symptoms are usually significant pain in both breasts while breast feeding, sharp pains and burning between BF, nipples may look normal or irritated, baby will usually have thrush, you and the baby will need treatment so call our office and pediatrician

Instructions about over the counter meds while BF:

- Tylenol and ibuprofen are fine to take while breast feeding

- If you have any concerns about specific meds, please call the office. Medication can get to the baby through breast milk, in fact more medication goes to the baby through breast milk than taking meds while pregnant.

-Principles to remember when taking meds (unless instructed otherwise)- best time to take a medication to lessen affects on the baby is right after nursing and right before infant's longest sleep, take lowest recommended dose, avoid OTC combination products, antihistamines may decrease milk supply, know and monitor for side effects in you and the baby

ALCOHOL /MARIJUANA CONSUMPTION WHILE BF:

Alcohol can decrease milk supply, can go to the baby and affect sleep. The exact amount that won't affect the baby is unknown so it is best to limit the amount you drink. If you only have one drink, it is probably out of your system within 2-3 hours however if you drink more, it will take longer.

Marijuana: The exact risk to the baby is unclear, what we do know is that it does go to the baby and that it concentrates in the fetal brain. The first 2 years of life is a very important time for brain development. The recommendation is to avoid marijuana for this reason, why risk it?

If you don't breast feed: you should expect a period of engorgement starting between 2-4 days after delivery and lasting 24-72 hours. You may have a low grade fever and muscle aches. You may find relief with tight fitting bras, icepacks, and avoiding stimulation to the breast (avoid pumping or hot showers). Tylenol or ibuprofen may be taken every 4 to 6 hours for relief of symptoms. Cabbage leaves placed on your breasts may also relieve your symptoms. Symptoms should resolve within 24 to 72 hours although leaking of milk may continue for weeks.

Weaning: When weaning, it is best to drop a feed every 3 or 4 days. If you wean quicker, engorgement may be more painful.

Postpartum Wellness Action plan:

1. Be aware if you are higher risk for postpartum depression. Risks: history of depression, anxiety, difficult pregnancy, difficult getting pregnant, minimal family support, significant stressors
2. WHO IS PART OF YOUR COMMUNITY? Family? Church? Small group? Friend group? Work friends? If you don't have a good support system: NEED TO WORK ON BEFORE DELIVERY
3. Create a list of things that will help you after the baby is born:
 - SLEEP: sleep when baby sleeps, let someone watch the baby so you can sleep, help at night: type of help that improves your sleep depends on whether you are breast feeding or bottle feeding. Avoid caffeine after noon, turn off TV before bed, white noise, adjust monitor to hear only when the baby is crying (you don't need to hear the baby's every move)
 - MEALS: freeze food before you deliver, have people bring meals (it is ok to ask for healthy foods and let people know if you have allergies), drink lots of water, don't skip meals! Have healthy snacks around (figure this out before you deliver so you can either buy it before you have a baby or you have specific things to ask for). Groceries: create a typical list that you will be able to give to your husband after (write down favorite brand and specific food to make it easier), use curb side shopping for someone to pick up your groceries or deliver.
 - VISITORS: A new mom should not be the "hostess", people who bring meals DON'T have to be entertained by you!!! Ask people who come and want to be entertained to come back later (much later?). Set boundaries, let your husband know - let him tell people: we would love a visit...later.
 - Laundry/cleaning: ignore or let someone else do it. If you have big kids then this is a good way for them to show responsibility - they can clean up after themselves
 - Other kids: arrange carpooling, play dates, fun things with dad, have dad take over their night routine before you deliver (you can't do their night routine and the baby's especially if you are breast feeding)
 - Errands: have people that are willing to run easy errands for you (asking your husband to pick something up on the way home from work just delays his arrival home and if you were like me, you didn't want to wait an extra 20 minutes for him to get home)
 - Emergency friends: have a couple friends or family who you can call in an emergency, when you really need help or when you really need a break, be clear on your needs. If you don't tell them what you need, they will just do what they think you may need.
 - EXERCISE: walk, yoga...even 5-10 minutes daily outside the house helps
 - GET OUT OF THE HOUSE: go for coffee, do your own errand, outing with big kids, go on a date with your husband, walk around the block, just get out and breathe fresh air
 - Share your feelings: anxiety, sadness, feeling overwhelmed is normal, allow yourself to feel these feelings, don't hide them and feel ashamed. If you share your feelings, most of the time other women will tell you they felt the same way and they may even give you tips that will help.
 - Anxiety: deep breathing, mindfulness exercises, prayer, exercise
 - Avoid alcohol, drugs and overeating comfort food, they may make you feel better for a second but not longer
 - Address unrealistic expectations: I should be a perfect mom who doesn't need help. None of us are perfect, the sooner we embrace that the better we will realize our mistakes and move on...allows you to become resilient. make sure you have safe people to talk to when you are feeling down on yourself, we make mistakes, we get tired, you aren't always going to be madly in love with your children. You will feel better if you address these fears.
 - Complementary/Alternative options for depression, anxiety: bright light therapy, Omega 3 fatty acids 1-2 grams daily, folate 1000mcg daily, acupuncture, massage.