



August e-newsletter, 2009

Topic: Breastfeeding

I hope that you are enjoying the summer, taking some time to relax and soaking in the beautiful weather. In celebration of National Breastfeeding Month, I will be discussing breastfeeding from A-Z! Topics include preparation for breastfeeding while pregnant, getting your breastfeeding relationship off to a great start, breastfeeding after returning to work and even how to wean your little one when the time is right.

Enjoy!

Nurse Wendy

Why should you Breastfeed?

Are you considering breastfeeding your new baby? There are many compelling reasons to consider breastfeeding. First and foremost, your breast milk is the perfect nutrition for your baby. Studies have shown that the nutritional value and make-up of your breast milk is constantly changing to keep up with your baby's changing needs. Additionally, it is proven that babies who breastfeed have higher IQ's, less instances of allergies and ear infections and lower rates of childhood obesity. The benefits don't stop there. Mom can enjoy a lower risk of breast and uterine cancers, lower rates of postpartum depression and an even quicker return to her pre-pregnancy weight since breastfeeding a newborn can burn up to 1,100 calories a day! If you weren't convinced already, one study reported that breastfeeding your baby exclusively for the first year of life has financial benefits as well. The study found that in one year a family would save enough money through breastfeeding to purchase a major appliance (about \$2,000).

Preparing to Breastfeed while Pregnant

The good news is that breastfeeding requires very little preparation. While some books will encourage a pregnant mom to toughen her nipples during pregnancy, I think it is best to leave your nipples alone. Stimulating your nipples can be dangerous as it can cause your uterus to contract prematurely. It is a good idea to ask your care provider to check your nipples and make certain they are not flat or inverted. If they are, seek out a lactation consultant prior to delivery. This can be easily treated to make it easier for your new baby to latch on at the time of delivery. Here are a few more tips to help you prepare for breastfeeding while you are still pregnant:

- Enroll in a breastfeeding class (such as the free Breastfeeding Basics class offered at PacifiCord). While learning to breastfeed is mostly on-the-job training, these classes can give you a good idea of what to expect in the early days of breastfeeding.
- Set up your support system. Prior to delivery it is a good idea to know where you can turn for help should you encounter any obstacles. Most hospitals offer a free or low cost breastfeeding clinic for new moms. You can also locate lactation consultants in your area, or attend a La Leche League meeting for additional education and support.

- Enlist the encouragement of family and friends. Inform your family and friends of your intention to breastfeed your baby, and ask them to support you in your decision.
- Purchase your supplies. You already have everything you need to breastfeed your baby...however, you might want to purchase a tube of Lansinoh or Pure Lan cream. Lanolin based products can be used on your nipples between feedings to ease any tenderness. It is also a good idea to have some breast pads to catch any leaking (purchase ones that do not have a plastic liner as they can trap moisture and lead to yeast infections). Last, I do not recommend purchasing a nursing bra until you have been breastfeeding for about two weeks. Each woman's body makes different changes while breastfeeding. In the early weeks, a sports bra will work well. Once you have adjusted to producing milk, then get a proper bra fitting and choose a supportive nursing bra.

Getting off to a Great Start!

Once you deliver your little one, a new journey begins! Most babies will show signs of interest in breastfeeding shortly after birth (usually 20-40 minutes). These signs include licking and smacking their lips as well as rooting and turning towards your breast. This is the perfect time to initiate the first feeding. Allow your nurses to assist you to get the baby latched on properly and teach you how to position your baby to your breast. When a baby is nursing properly, you should feel a gentle tugging at the nipple. Remember the cardinal rule of breastfeeding...breastfeeding should not be painful! If you experience pain, remove the baby from the breast and try to latch again. Pain is most often caused by an improper latch and can generally be corrected quickly and easily.

The first 24 hours can be very unpredictable. Some babies come out very eager to breastfeed and do not want to stop, while others are exhausted from the birth and are sleepy and reluctant at first. Remember that both scenarios are normal. Do not get frustrated if your baby needs a little more time, he/she will perk up and nurse like a champ within a day or so.

While in the hospital, enlist the assistance of your nurses and lactation consultants. Ask for help every time you breastfeed so that you can get lots of tips, tricks and advice from the experts. This will ensure that you have a wealth of knowledge to draw on once you are home. If there is ever any question, or you experience pain throughout a feeding, seek help right away. Most breastfeeding difficulties can easily be solved early on so the baby does not develop bad habits.

I generally recommend avoiding all artificial nipples for the first 10 days of breastfeeding. Nursing at the breast requires a different type of sucking than does a bottle or pacifier. It is best to teach your baby proper sucking at the breast first, then initiate bottles and pacifiers after breastfeeding is well established. This should cut down on nipple soreness and ensure your breastfeeding relationship is off to an excellent start!

Going Back to Work and Continuing your Breastfeeding Relationship

Returning to work does not have to mean an untimely end to your breastfeeding relationship. Many new moms continue to breastfeed long after returning to the work force. It is easiest to do this with the help of a good electric breast pump. Once your breastfeeding relationship is established (generally around two weeks), I recommend that you begin pumping once a day to build a stockpile of milk in your freezer. This will make it easier to return to work knowing that you have plenty of milk in reserve for your baby. The easiest way to accomplish this is at the first feeding of the morning, breastfeed the baby on one side while pumping the other side. Take the milk and pour it into a Ziploc Freezer Bag (or a breast milk storage bag). With a Sharpie, write the date and how many ounces on the bag and place it in the freezer, your breast milk will remain good in the freezer for 6 months. When you are ready to defrost, just place the bag under warm running water. Once thawed, pour it into a bottle, shake and serve. Here are a few more tips for returning to work:

- Start back to work mid-week so that your first week back is shorter and more manageable. It will make the adjustment easier on you both.
- Plan ahead for a place where you can pump during the work day. Or, if possible, go and see the baby on your lunch break for a quick baby fix and nursing session.
- Be sure to breastfeed right before work and right after work. This is a great way to reconnect with your baby and to slow down from a stressful day at the office.

A Word about Weaning

So, the time has come to end your breastfeeding relationship. You might be wondering just how best to accomplish this. Baby-led is generally the easiest way to stress-free weaning. When the baby leads he/she will slowly drop feedings until they are no longer nursing. Generally the last feedings before bed are the last to go. This process can take weeks or even months, so patience is the key. If you are seeking a quicker solution, you can guide the weaning process by dropping one feeding at a time. Preparation is essential when following this method. Have your breastfeeding substitution in place and ready to go so you can distract an eager nurser and entice them with an alternative. Allow 3-5 days after eliminating one feeding to eliminate the next one. This will allow your body time to slowly adjust to the new milk supply and help you avoid unnecessary discomfort.

Thank you for joining us this month as we celebrate one of the many joys of parenting. Breastfeeding is an amazing way to bond and connect with your new baby, and the benefits far outlast the months you invest. I wish you a healthy and enjoyable breastfeeding relationship! Join us next month as we take a cue from the Boy Scouts, “Be Prepared”. We will have a little fun discussing some of the more common (and some not so common) things that can happen when you are out and about with baby and how to be prepared for any situation!

Be Well,

Nurse Wendy



QUESTIONS?

Email me at: AskNurseWendy@PacifiCord.com

RESOURCES:

www.milkalicious.org – Nursing boutique, breastfeeding supplies and lactation consultants

www.motherwear.com – Nursing clothes, bras, and breastfeeding products

www.modestmiddles.com – Nursing tops for new moms

www.la lecheleague.org – Free mother to mother breastfeeding support, find a group near you

www.breastfeeding.com – Locate a lactation consultant in your area

EVENTS:

August Events-

Free Baby Shower & Infant Massage Class, Sunday, August 23rd - 2:30 – 4:30 pm

Dress for the Nines Boutique, 1220 Cleveland Avenue Suite M111, San Diego

First 20 Guests to RSVP will get a FREE Gift Basket! RSVP at info@dressforthenines.com or 619-299-0260

September Events-

"The Great Vaccine Debate" at Hoag Memorial Hospital on September 16th, 2009

Milkalicious™ (<http://www.milkalicious.org/>) will be hosting "The Great Vaccine Debate" an awareness event at Hoag Hospital to benefit the Orange County Breastfeeding Coalition, and PacifiCord is a sponsor. The event will take place on Wednesday, September 16th, from 9am to 1pm in Conference Center, Room CC1 & CC2.

October Events-

OC Kids Faire (Babyville), October 3-4, 2009 10:00-5:00

Orange County Fairgrounds, Costa Mesa, CA www.kidsfaire.com

PacifiCord will have a booth (#321), please stop by and say hello!

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