

## **Module 1A- What's so great about breastfeeding?**

**What I learn:** Breastfeeding is powerful – it benefits mom and baby and fathers who support breastfeeding have healthier smarter babies!

### **Babies and Kids:**

1- “Builds baby’s immune system” - Less infections + less likely to get sick enough to go to the clinic or be overnight in the hospital- count any of these:

- \* Less diarrhea/vomiting illnesses (“stomach flu”)
- \* Less respiratory/breathing infections (pneumonia, wheezing, bad cold)
- \* Less ear infections
- \* Fewer urinary tract infections
- \* Fewer blood infections

2- Lower risk of infant death:

- \* Less babies die worldwide when breastfed (compared to fed formula)
- \* Lower risk of SIDS (Sudden infant death syndrome)
  - don’t know why but studies show much less risk for breastfed babies

3- Less chance of these, especially if it runs in the family:

- \* Obesity/overweight
  - breastfeeding babies seem to learn when they are full
- \* Eczema (“ex-zee-ma”-Atopic dermatitis)
- \* Asthma (wheezing, reactive airways)

4- Possibly higher intelligence AND faster development

–this also depends a lot on mom and how baby is raised, but it is a wonderful possibility.

### **Benefits for the mother of your baby:**

1-Lower risk of cancer:

- \* Breast cancer risk is less the longer you breastfeed total over all your kids
- \* Ovarian cancer risk is less if you breastfeed for 6+ months over all your kids

2- Less chance of heart (cardiovascular) disease with total breastfeeding 12+ months over all your kids- all of these are less likely:

- \* Obesity/ overweight
- \* High blood pressure (Hypertension)
- \* High cholesterols (Hyperlipidemia)
- \* Heart disease (Cardiovascular disease)

3- Less chance of diabetes type 2 (if you did not have pregnancy [gestational] diabetes)

4- Child spacing – breast feeding can help you space your pregnancies but it is not birth control alone

### **Dad + Mom + Baby Benefits**

Father – Baby Bonding

- \* Supporting breastfeeding helps your baby be healthier and smarter and you a proud father!
- \* Makes you feel good when you are close to the baby (touch and looking) before and after feedings.

- \* Skin to skin contact between fathers and babies helps dads bond with their baby
- \* Fathers and Mothers that breastfeed learn how to parent cooperatively for the benefit of their baby.

Mother Bonding- the hormone that causes the milk to come out (oxytocin)

- \* Makes your baby's mother want to care for your baby,
- \* Makes her feel good when she is close to the baby (touching and looking) This is big – many moms believe this closeness has helped them through many hard times.

## **Module 1C - Breastfeeding- Glad you Asked!**

**What I learn:** The more I know about breastfeeding the more informed a choice I can make for myself and my baby and the more support I can provide to the mother of my baby, encouraging her to follow-through on breastfeeding.

### **Can a mother get a tattoo while she is breastfeeding?**

Yes she can- it will not affect her milk or milk supply. It makes common sense not to get the tattoo on her breast or on areas where she has skin-to-skin with the baby while breastfeeding so she don't get skin irritation.

### **Can a mother breastfeed after the baby has teeth?**

Yes. Babies can breastfeed and not bite because they use their lips and tongue and jaws to pump the milk. If the baby does bite while breastfeeding, encourage the mother to take him or her off the breast right away and say: "No, ouch!" It is not recommended to bite back or pop the baby. Your baby is smart and will soon learn that biting is not part of breastfeeding. You can offer a biting biscuit (maybe the baby is teething) or a play time instead (maybe the baby is just saying "done").

### **Can a mother eat spicy foods while breastfeeding? Will it make the baby gassy or mean?**

Mothers can eat spicy foods. It is true that some babies cry or fuss after breastfeeding if the mother eats spicy hot foods BUT mothers shouldn't stop any foods until you see how your own baby reacts. The baby may get gas (which is normal) from some foods. What a mother eats flavors her milk but will not change your baby's personality (will not make him or her mean). Also, remember babies cry for lots of reasons - crying does not mean there is something wrong with the breast milk!

### **Could large breasts suffocate the baby while breastfeeding?**

No. When your baby latches on to the breast in the way that is comfortable for the mother, the baby's nose protects his or her breathing and lets air in and out no matter how big the breast is. But remember that a rollover accident while sleeping can suffocate the baby so you need a safe sleep place for the baby. The baby can sleep right next to you or the mother BUT in a Pac-N-Play or bassinette or even a dresser drawer.

### **What is "let-down" anyway?**

That is when a hormone called oxytocin (say "Ox- ee - tow -sin") acts to squeeze the milk pillows in the breast and let the milk come spurting out at the beginning of nursing. Then you will hear the baby gulping and the mother may feel "pins and needles" in her breast. The baby sucking on the breast, or any "reminder" about the baby (smell, hearing a cry) start oxytocin. (Pitocin is what the doctor gives; oxytocin is what your body gives.)

### **If a mother has postpartum depression, does it change her milk?**

No. A mother's milk is good for her baby even if she is depressed. The milk does not change depending on her mood. It is really important to get help if you think the mother of your baby might be depressed. If a mental health worker says the mother should take

medicines, there are several (Zoloft™ for example) that are FINE with breastfeeding, and of course counseling is safe with breastfeeding. Encourage the mother of your baby to get help if she seems depressed!

### **What makes a woman have a lot of milk? Is it breast size or areola size?**

Breast size and breast shape do not have anything to do with amount of milk. Milk amount depends on the baby sucking well and often at the breast. To make a lot of milk, the baby should feed often (every 2-3 hours) and the mother should let the baby empty the breast as much as possible (nurse till he/she drops off around 15 minutes on each side). Giving formula gets in the way of making milk because the baby's sucking does not get a chance to "tell" the breast how much milk he/she needs.

### **What is colostrum ?**

Colostrum (Co- LOS-trum) is the very first milk the mother's breast makes in the first 2-5 days. It is small in amount (1-2 teaspoons per feeding- really!) and all he or she needs to drink, and is very powerful in immune protection for the baby. Some people call it the first immunization. It might look like butter not milk, but do not let that worry you. Colostrum is a great gift for a baby. (Colostrum is not cholesterol- many people mix up the two words).

### **Everyone talks about the areola and I don't know what that is.**

It is the darker colored skin around the nipple. Some people say "Ah- REE- oh-la" and others say "Ah – ree- OH-la" and either is correct. The size of the areola can be large or small- women are different and the size does not have to do with latch or milk. Usually a comfortable latch includes much of the areola in the baby's mouth.

### **Can every woman breastfeed?**

In general YES. Breastfeeding is "natural" but most women need some help. If a woman has had breast surgery or if she has inverted nipples (nipples go back in not out) make sure she gets help from a lactation counselor. Women who are on methadone can breastfeed, but any woman who is using street drugs should not breastfeed (even more importantly she needs HELP). If a mother has HIV she will also be asked not to breastfeed.

### **What are all these breastfeeding "holds"? Can I see a picture?**

Yes- see the hand out. There is football, cradle, cross-cradle and side-lying holds (put the baby back in his/her sleep place when done). Some women have nursed with the baby sitting upright on their leg. There is not a "wrong" way- just make sure the baby's knees are facing the mother.

### **What is "milk coming in"?**

The milk is already there, it's just that about 2-5 days after a mother delivers a baby, her milk "factory" suddenly makes WAY more milk- up from about 2 ounces per day to about 16 ounces per day. That is why some women get engorged (breasts so full milk cannot come out without some help, often best done with hand expression – massaging the breast). The "milk coming in" is often slower or delayed (waits a few more days) if

you had a slightly premature baby, or the mother has diabetes, had the baby by Cesarean section, pitocin for labor or she was very sick. Encourage the mother of your baby to keep the faith – get help from the nurse and begin pumping if recommended.

## **Module 1D– Fathers Want Healthy Smart Babies!**

**What I learn:** Information that will help me support the mother of my baby to breastfeed.

### **Common Breastfeeding Myths: True or False?**

#### **Anyone who smokes cigarettes should not breastfeed.**

**False:** The medical recommendation (from doctors and scientific evidence) is that women should be encouraged to breastfeed, including those who smoke cigarettes. You or your partner may disagree, but please understand that the benefits of breastfeeding are so good that they outweigh the risk of the tiny amounts of nicotine or cotine in breastmilk of smokers. Babies of mothers who smoke are more likely to get respiratory (breathing) infections, and also have a higher risk of SIDS. Babies of mothers who breastfeed are protected against respiratory infections, and also have a lower risk of SIDS. So mothers who have not yet been able to quit smoking **SHOULD DEFINITELY BREASTFEED** because it helps the baby. It is always a good idea for your own health to quit smoking-see your doctor for help and ask your partner and family for positive support.

#### **Mothers have to eat healthy when they are breastfeeding or the milk will not be good for the baby.**

**False:** It is always good to eat healthy, but a mother's breast milk will be good no matter what she eats (chips, orange pop, junk food, fast food). She will feel better and have more energy if she eats well (protein, low-fat, lots of fruits and vegetables).

#### **A mother should get something to drink every time she breastfeeds.**

**True:** Really, a mother should drink whenever she is thirsty. Water is the best thing to drink.

#### **A mother should wash her breasts and nipples with soap and water, or wipe off with rubbing alcohol, after each breastfeeding so they are clean.**

**False:** The baby's mouth on the nipple and areola does not make the nipple or breast dirty. The mother doesn't need soap on her breasts because it will dry out the skin. Rubbing alcohol should not get anywhere near her breasts! The mother should express a little breast milk after each feeding onto the nipple area and let it air dry- breast milk has immune and healing ingredients that will help heal and cleanse her skin. A regular shower once a day with just water on the breast is fine.

#### **It is OK to have up to 2-3 cups of coffee or caffeinated drinks each day and breastfeed.**

**True.** Check it out, google "coffee and breastfeeding"! "Drinking a moderate amount (up to 2 to 3 cups a day) of coffee or other caffeinated beverages does not affect a breastfeeding baby." If a mother drinks a cup of coffee and breastfeeds shortly after you might notice the baby is not ready to go to sleep- so encourage her to have her caffeine earlier in the day.

**If a mother's nipples are hurting she should get help right away because breastfeeding should be comfortable.**

**True:** All pain needs to be evaluated or checked out with a health caregiver- either a doctor or nurse or lactation consultant. The mother of your baby probably needs help with latch and position, and this is easy to fix with good help.

**If a mother breastfeeds she can lose her pregnancy weight quickly.**

**True:** We know a mother will burn up an extra 400-500 calories every day when she breastfeeds, so she really can lose weight quickly! Plus with the uterus shrinking due to the breast milk let down hormone oxytocin many women feel their tummy gets flat sooner than with formula feeding.

**Breastfeeding makes breasts sag and look less perky, and it might mess up nipples.**

**False:** The hormones of pregnancy make breasts get larger, and then the breasts go down (shrink) after the pregnancy hormones are done. That is why women's breasts are different after they have a baby. If a woman breastfeeds her breasts will stay larger while breastfeeding (the milk hormones) and then they will go down after the baby weans. So if a woman wants full time perky breasts, the thing is say "no" to pregnancy, not to breastfeeding! When the baby is breastfeeding the nipple should be way in the back of the baby's mouth (good latch) so the woman's nipples feel good. Encourage the mother of your baby to get help within 24 hours if there is nipple pain, but for her own comfort, not because the nipple will get messed up.

**It's OK for women to use all usual skin lotions and perfumes when breastfeeding.**

**True:** Babies loves how their mother smells and how their father smells! What a mother does for yourself everyday does not need to change. Mothers should just not put lotion or perfume right on the breast or nipple- only lanolin or expressed breast milk can go there- but everywhere else is fine.

**It's nasty for a woman to have the baby sucking on her breasts.**

**False:** That is not true. The baby drinking milk from breasts is completely natural. That is what breasts are for. The milk "let down" hormone, oxytocin, gives mothers a deeply calm, relaxed feeling AND it helps her to want to hold and bond to her baby – none of that is nasty at all. A woman's breasts might release milk during sex because of the same hormone (oxytocin), and she might have a mild sexual feeling while breastfeeding, which it is OK to enjoy.

**A mother might have soreness or pain in the first two weeks of breastfeeding.**

**True.** A woman's nipples and breasts are not used to the baby feeding. But fathers can help her be in control of this: your baby's mother should only accept deep comfortable latch- don't let the baby suck on the nipple only. Encourage her to use different positions to feed and start on the other side each time. Encourage her to get help if she needs to. Your baby's mother will feel tugging and pulling, but pain IS NOT part of breastfeeding.