

## **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) starts oxytocin. (Pitocin is what the doctor gives; oxytocin is from your body.)

### **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 (8-12 times in 24 hours) and the mother should let the baby empty the breast as much as possible (nurse till he/she drops off the breast or falls asleep).

**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 don't worry. 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 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.