

Module 4A- “Do the first two weeks last forever?”

Teaching point: Problems have solutions

Teaching materials: Handout with problems and solutions.

Game Plan: Ask your client to choose the 3 that are most needed right now – review together. Ask if she has any other questions and you can get help for her together.

1. **Problem:** Engorgment (this means my breasts are too full and need to release milk).

Solution: Use warm compresses to breasts, pain relief (advil/ibuprofen or Tylenol), massage from outer breast gently in to the areola to create nipple and express a little milk- then hand express or breastfeed if you can. Do this every 2 hours, follow with cool compress to the breast if it feels good. If you get the milk out your breasts will feel better. Don't give a formula bottle- that does not let your milk out and does not make your breasts feel better. Many women say hand expression is better than a pump at this time.

2. **Problem:** I am very very tired (I am too tired to think).

Solution: Put the baby somewhere safe, take a 10 minute “power nap,” and then have a hot or cold drink to get energy. If you have someone to help you ask them to make dinner tonight. The first two weeks are the hardest for this – it does get better.

3. **Problem:** As soon as I go to breastfeed my other kids act up, get wild and need stuff.

Solution: The older kids may be jealous of the baby's special breastfeeding time. This doesn't mean don't breastfeed! Give each child one-on-one time every day while you are not breastfeeding. And when you are breastfeeding, give everyone a special job to help (bring water, bring burp rag, bring book to read). If the kids will listen to words, have them listen to a story you read or make up or play or color quietly at your feet and talk with them while you breastfeed. If you do not have another grownup right now or the kids will not listen at all, put each child in a safe-space-time-out just while you breastfeed the baby (their own room with door latched and closed or playpen or crib). If you must do this then after breastfeeding talk with them about having a better family time next time.

4. **Problem:** My baby is eating all the time or too often!

Solution: Ask yourself how often is your baby breastfeeding, and how long per side? Breastfeeding every 1 ½ -2 hours (from beginning to beginning of feeding) is normal and a good sign! After 15 minutes each side you can release the baby from the breast (with your finger in his mouth) if he/she is not already released. ALSO -sometimes babies “cluster feed”- every hour for several hours, and then sleep a bit longer- that is OK too.

5. **Problem:** My baby has diarrhea. There is a runny poop every time I breastfeed him.

Solution: This is NORMAL and OK. If the poops are soft and/or runny and with every breastfeeding, then he is getting enough to eat and it is a GOOD sign. If the poops have blood or are pure water (like pee), call the doctor or nurse.

6. **Problem:** I have killer “period” or “labor” cramps every time I breastfeed.

Solution: Oxytocin (say “ox- eee- toe – sin”) is the milk “let down” hormone. It also shrinks your uterus back to size fast, which is what is happening when you feel that (better and quicker than with bottle feeding). Take pain relief (ibuprofen/ Tylenol), use a warm towel on your lower belly while you nurse, and do your labor/Lamaze breathing. This pain gets better in about 2-3 days, and your uterus getting small helps your belly get small and your tummy get flat.

7. **Problem:** My baby sucks his/her hands and fist a lot. Is she(he) hungry or does she(he) need formula or a pacifier?

Solution: Good for you for seeing early hunger cues- never wait till your baby cries to feed. If she/he licks, nuzzles, roots, or sucks hands or fingers, try a breastfeeding if it’s been an hour since the last one. Pacifiers have zero calories, so don’t give one now – wait till your supply is established at 3-4 weeks. Formula bottles lower your milk supply- avoid them in the first two weeks unless the doctor or nurse says to give.

8. **Problem:** Crying baby- Why is my baby crying! Does he/she need formula?

Solution: Your baby needs your breast milk, not formula. Check first if the baby is hungry- it may take a few tries to latch since hard crying means he/she is over-hungry. If the baby does not eat and you are sure it is not hunger, change the diaper and undress the baby to check him/her all over. Also check for a fever- if the temperature is over 100.4 F then call the doctor now. You can unwrap and re-wrap the baby, you can hold the baby skin to skin, you can hold him/her tummy down and gently pat his back. Get help now if the baby does not stop crying, or if you are worried or angry or too tired. Never never shake a baby.

9. **Problem:** My baby is very sleepy and has not eaten in 4 or more hours.

Solution: Gently wake the baby up: unwrap, change diaper, give a sponge bath, hold skin to skin against your chest to wake him. Begin a breastfeeding: stroke the baby’s upper lip with your nipple to get him/her rooting (opening his mouth) and try to feed. If the baby will not wake or feed, call the doctor or nurse now.

10. **Problem:** My nipples are killing me. My nipples are starting to hurt a lot when I put the baby on the breast.

Solution: Check your latch- make sure the baby has most of the areola (darker part) in his mouth and the nipple in the back of his mouth. Make sure you are “tummy to tummy” with baby facing you to feed. Alternate which breast you start with and change your feeding positions (cradle, side lying, football). Express a little breast milk on your breast after each feeding and let it air dry. Release the baby (finger in his mouth) after 15 minutes on a side. Call the warm line if there is pain with nursing after the first ½ minute. You can use lanolin ointment or expressed milk on your nipples till you get help. Keep expressing milk every 2-3 hours till you get help.