

Encourage Breastfeeding Before Birth

Now is the time to influence a mother's decision to breastfeed. You have mother's attention... You can make a difference! Make it routine practice to discuss breastfeeding early in the pregnancy. Mothers who are educated early on are more successful.

Suggestions for Starting the Breastfeeding Conversation:

Ask moms: "How do you feel about breastfeeding?"

- Acknowledge her concerns.
- Explore her beliefs.

If she has breastfed before, ask:

- About her breastfeeding experience.
- How long did she breastfeed?
- About her decision to wean.
- If she is currently breastfeeding?

Take this opportunity to discuss the importance of breastfeeding.

Explain the benefits of breastfeeding and risks associated with **not** breastfeeding particularly if there is a family history of certain diseases linked with lower rates of breastfeeding.

Risks of NOT Breastfeeding

Formula Fed Babies Have:

- More vomiting and diarrhea.
- More ear and respiratory infections.
- A high risk of childhood obesity.
- An increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/Crib death).
- A higher risk of developing diabetes later in life.
- An increased chance of developing allergies and asthma.



Breastfeeding... For my baby. For me.

Benefits of Breastfeeding

Mothers and babies share a bond through breastfeeding and breastfeeding provides the best start for baby.

Breastfed Babies Have:

- A more developed immune system.
- A lower risk of certain types of childhood cancers.

Breastfeeding Mothers:

- Lose pregnancy weight quicker.
- Have a lower risk of Type 2 Diabetes, breast and ovarian cancer.
- Experience less bleeding after delivery.

Suggestions for Continuing the Conversation:

- As she gets closer to birth, she will have more questions and your support becomes even more important.
- Provide follow-up from previous visits for continuity of care.
- Discuss the changes in her body during pregnancy in preparation for breastfeeding.
- Include her family and friends in discussions and suggest the support person go to classes.

Getting Mom Ready for Delivery:

- Encourage her to make a birth plan and include her support person in the discussion.
- While in the hospital, recommend that she share her birth plan and let staff know that she wants to breastfeed.
- Encourage holding her baby skin to skin immediately after birth and nursing her baby during the first hour.
- Tell her about the importance of rooming in.
- Let her know that she can refuse pacifiers and all supplements unless medically necessary.
- Provide her with a list of resources including who to call for help after hospital discharge.
- Inform her about the Breastfeeding Mothers' Bill of Rights.

Take a detailed breastfeeding history. Take note of the mother's plans. Provide the support she needs to carry out her wishes. Consider the patient's culture and community. Incorporate breastfeeding as a component of the initial breast examination. If the exam suggests that the woman is at risk for breastfeeding problems, refer her to a lactation consultant (IBCLC).