

Provider Information

BF – Breastfeeding

BF-LA LIFESTYLE ADAPTATIONS

OUTCOME: The parents/family will understand life style adaptations regarding breastfeeding.

STANDARDS:

1. Discuss options for continuing to breastfeeding while separated from the baby, such as with work, school, and hospitalizations.
2. Discuss the reasons for eliminating the exposure of the baby to nicotine, including SIDS and respiratory illness. Encourage the abstinence from nicotine (smoked and chewed). If abstinence is not possible, wait at least one hour after using.
3. Discuss the potentially lethal effects for the baby if a breastfeeding mother uses recreational/street drugs (e.g., particularly drugs such as speed, crystal-meth, amphetamines).
4. Discuss that it is likely to take 2 hours for a nursing mother's body to eliminate the alcohol from the breast milk if she has a standard serving of an alcohol-containing beverage. A standard serving is typically 12 ounces of beer, one shot of liquor, or 4–5 ounces of wine.
5. Discuss options for breastfeeding in public.
6. Identify community resources available for breastfeeding support (e.g., La Leche League, WIC, community health nursing breastfeeding educators, IHS Breastfeeding Hotline 1-877-868-9473).

The importance and duration of Breastfeeding:

Exclusive breastfeeding is sufficient to support optimal growth and development for the first 6 months of life. Breastfeeding should begin within 1 hour of birth and is made possible by skin-to-skin contact between mother and baby immediately after the baby is born. Breastfeeding mothers should be encouraged to breastfeed exclusively for the first six months of their baby's life and to start feeding their baby solid foods at 6 months while continuing to breastfeed. Breastfeeding should be continued for at least the first year of life and beyond as mutually desired by mother and baby.

Breastfeeding in Public

Many women have reported feeling uncomfortable breastfeeding in public, even doing so discreetly. It is important for the mother to remember that you are feeding your baby. You are not doing anything inappropriate. Awareness of the need to support new breastfeeding mothers is building. Many states and some Tribes have passed laws to protect nursing women.

Even with the growing awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding, you may find it difficult to do so in public. Yet it is important to believe in yourself and your choice. Remind yourself that you can succeed and wear your confidence! Some tips for breastfeeding in public include:

- Wear clothes that allow easy access to your breasts, such as tops that pull up from the waist or button down.
- Use a special breastfeeding blanket around your shoulders. Some babies do not like this, though, so you will have to see what works for your baby.
- Breastfeed your baby in a sling. Slings or other soft infant carriers are especially helpful for traveling – it makes it easier to keep your baby comforted and close to you.
- Slip into a women's lounge or dressing room to breastfeed.
- If you are worried about being too revealing in public, practice at home until you are comfortable.

It helps to breastfeed your baby before he or she becomes fussy so that you have time to get into a comfortable place or position to feed. (Over time, you will learn your baby's early hunger cues.) When you get to your destination, scout out a place you can breastfeed, if that makes you feel more comfortable.

The Challenges of Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding can be challenging at times, especially in the early days. It is important to remember that breast milk is best for your baby and that you need to breastfeed exclusively for the first 6 months of your baby's life. When you are at home, as much skin-to-skin contact is beneficial to the baby. Find ways to make breastfeeding work for you and your baby. And while many women are faced with one or more challenges, many women do not struggle at all!

Is it safe to smoke, drink, or use drugs?

If you smoke, it is best for you and your baby to quit as soon as possible. If you cannot quit, it is still better to breastfeed because it can help protect your baby from respiratory problems and sudden infant death syndrome. Be sure to smoke away from your baby and change your clothes to keep your baby away from the chemicals smoking leaves behind. Ask a health care provider for help quitting smoking! You should avoid alcohol, especially in large amounts. If you drink any alcohol, do not breastfeed for two hours after drinking.

Drugs It is not safe for you to use or be dependent on an illicit drug when you are breastfeeding. Drugs such as cocaine, codeine, marijuana, heroine, and PCP harm your baby. Some reported side effects in babies include seizures, vomiting, poor feeding, and tremors.

Can I take medicines if I am breastfeeding?

All medicines pass into your milk in small amounts but most have no effect on the baby (unless it is an illicit drug) and can be used while breastfeeding. Very few medicines

cannot be used while breastfeeding. Discuss any medicines you are using with your doctor and ask before you start using new medicines. This includes prescription and over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and dietary or herbal supplements. For some women with chronic health problems, stopping a medicine can be more dangerous than the effects it will have on the breastfed baby.

Can I breastfeed if I am sick?

Some women think that when they are sick, they should not breastfeed. Most common illnesses, such as colds, flu, or diarrhea, cannot be passed through breast milk. In fact, if you are sick, your breast milk will have antibodies in it. These antibodies will help protect your baby from getting the same sickness.

What should I do if I have postpartum depression?

Postpartum depression is less common, more serious, and can last more than two weeks. Symptoms can include feeling irritable and sad, having no energy and not being able to sleep, being overly worried about the baby or not having interest in the baby, and feeling worthless and guilty. If you have postpartum depression, work with your doctor to find the right treatment for you. Treatment may include medication such as antidepressants and talk therapy. Research has shown that while antidepressants pass into breast milk, few problems have been reported in infants. Even so, it is important to let your baby's doctor know if you need to take any medications.

Let your doctor know if your blues do not go away so that you can feel better. If you are having any thoughts about harming yourself or your baby, call 911 right away.

Will my partner be jealous if I breastfeed?

Some fathers feel left out when a mother breastfeeds. If you prepare your partner in advance, there should be no jealousy. Explain that you need support. Discuss the important and lasting health benefits of breastfeeding. Your partner can help by changing and burping the baby, sharing chores, and simply sitting with you and the baby to enjoy the special mood that breastfeeding creates. Your partner can also feed the baby pumped breast milk.

Do I have to restrict my sex life while breastfeeding?

No. But, if you are having vaginal dryness, you can try more foreplay and water-based lubricants. You can feed your baby or express some milk before lovemaking so your breasts will be more comfortable and less likely to leak. During sex, you also can put pressure on the nipple when it lets down or have a towel handy to catch the milk.

Do I still need birth control if I am breastfeeding?

Like other forms of birth control, breastfeeding is not a sure way to prevent pregnancy. Breastfeeding can delay the return of normal ovulation and menstrual cycles. You should still talk with a health care provider about birth control choices that are okay to use while breastfeeding.

Does my breastfed baby need vaccines? Is it safe for me to get a vaccine when I am breastfeeding?

Yes. Vaccines are very important to your baby's health. Breastfeeding may also enhance your baby's response to certain immunizations, providing more protection. Follow the schedule your doctor gives you, and, if you miss any, check with him or her about getting your baby back on track. Breastfeeding while the vaccine is given to your baby – or immediately afterward – can help relieve pain and soothe an upset baby. Most nursing mothers may also receive vaccines. Breastfeeding does not affect the vaccine. Vaccines are not harmful to your breast milk.

What should I do if my baby bites me?

If your baby starts to clamp down, you can put your finger in the baby's mouth and take him or her off your breast with a firm, "No." Try not to yell because it may scare the baby. If your baby continues to bite you, you can:

- Stop the feeding right away so the baby is not tempted to get another reaction from you. Do not laugh. This is part of your baby learning limits.
- Offer a teething toy, or a snack (if older baby), or drink from a cup instead.
- Put your baby down for a moment to show that biting brings a negative consequence. You can then pick your baby up again to give comfort.

What do I do if my baby keeps crying?

If your baby does not seem comforted by breastfeeding or other soothing measures, talk to your baby's doctor. Your baby may have colic or may be uncomfortable or in pain. You can also check to see if your baby is teething. The doctor and a lactation consultant can help you find ways to help your baby eat well.

Going Back to Work – Planning

Planning ahead for your return to work can help ease the transition. Learn as much as you can ahead of time and talk with your employer about your options. This can help you continue to enjoy breastfeeding your baby long after your maternity leave is over.

During Pregnancy

- Talk with your supervisor about your plans to breastfeed. Discuss if different types of work scheduling is permitted, such as starting back part time at first or taking split shifts.
- Find out if your company provides any breastfeeding support program for employees. If not, ask about private areas where you can comfortably and safely express milk.
- Ask the lactation program director, your supervisor, wellness program director, employee human resources office, or other coworkers if they know of other women at your company who have breastfed after returning to work.

During Your Maternity Leave

- Take as many weeks off as you can. At least six weeks of leave can help you recover from childbirth and settle into a good breastfeeding routine. Twelve weeks is even better.
- Practice expressing your milk by hand or with a quality breast pump. Freeze 2 to 4 ounces at a time to save for your baby after you return to work.
- Help your baby adjust to taking breast milk from a bottle before you return to work. You may try a cup when your baby is 4-5 months old. Babies are used to nursing with mom, so they usually drink from a bottle or cup when somebody else gives it.
- See if there is a childcare option close to work, so that you can visit and breastfeed your baby, if possible. Ask if the facility will use your pumped breast milk.
- Talk with your family and your childcare provider about your desire to breastfeed. Let them know that you will need their support.

Back at Work

- Keep talking with your supervisor about your schedule and what is or is not working for you. Keep in mind that returning to work gradually gives you more time to adjust.
- If your childcare is close by, find out if you can visit to breastfeed over lunch.
- When you arrive to pick up your baby from childcare, take time to breastfeed first. This will give you both time to reconnect before traveling home and returning to other family responsibilities.
- If you are having a hard time getting support, talk to your human resources department.

Find a Private Place to Express Milk

Work with your supervisor to find a private place to express your milk. If your company does not provide a private breastfeeding room, find another private area you can use. You may be able to use:

- An office with a door
- A conference room
- A little-used closet or storage area

The room should be private and secure from intruders when in use. The room should also have an electrical outlet if you are using an electric breast pump. Explain to your supervisor that it is best not to express milk in a restroom. Restrooms are unsanitary, and there are usually no electrical outlets. It can also be difficult to manage a pump in a toilet stall.

Pumping Tips

It may take time to adjust to pumping breast milk in a work environment. For easier pumping, try these tips for getting your milk to letdown from the milk ducts:

- Relax as much as you can
- Massage your breasts
- Gently rub your nipples
- Visualize the milk flowing down
- Think about your baby – bring a photo of your baby, or a blanket or item of clothing that smells like your baby

When to Express Milk

At work, you will need to express and store milk during the times you would normally feed your baby. (In the first few months of life, babies need to breastfeed 8 to 12 times in 24 hours.) This turns out to be about 2 to 3 times during a typical 8-hour work period. Expressing milk can take about 10 to 15 minutes. Sometimes it may take longer. This will help you make enough milk for your childcare provider to feed your baby while you are at work. The number of times you need to express milk at work should be equal to the number of feedings your baby will need while you are away. As the baby gets older, the number of feeding times may go down. Many women take their regular breaks and lunch breaks to pump. Some women come to work early or stay late to make up the time needed to express milk.

Storing Your Milk

Breast milk is food, so it is safe to keep it in an employee refrigerator or a cooler with ice packs. Talk to your supervisor about the best place to store your milk. If you work in a medical department, do not store milk in the same refrigerators where medical specimens are kept. Be sure to label the milk container with your name and the date you expressed the milk.

Get a Quality Breast Pump

A good-quality electric breast pump may be your best strategy for efficiently removing milk during the workday. Contact a lactation consultant or your local hospital, WIC program, or public health department to learn where to buy or rent a good pump. Electric pumps that allow you to express milk from both breasts at the same time reduce pumping time.

Click here for a Patient Education Handout for the mother on [Lifestyle Adaptations during Breastfeeding](#).

Flesch Score 66/8th