

Breastfeeding Challenges

Time: 20 - 35 minutes total

Purpose: Educate women about common breastfeeding problems.

Objectives: Participants will be able to:

- 1). List one or more steps to prevent breastfeeding problems.
- 3). Identify one or more resources for help with breastfeeding.

Materials: Amy Spangler's book Breastfeeding: A Parent's Guide.

Teaching doll

Breast Models with foam pads

Homemade ice pack – zip lock bag with ice cubes or large bag that held frozen peas or corn – fill with packing chips, etc.

Small towel or large washcloth

1. Introduction: All mothers need to know how to prevent breastfeeding problems and what to do about them. Today we're going to talk about the most common problems.

Engorgement

- ***Stuff the breast model with the foam padding that comes with it. Pass the "engorged breast model" around the class group. Have each mother feel how full and hard it is. As they pass it around, begin talking.***
- This can happen in the first week postpartum whether the mother breastfeeds or not. It's caused by hormones and milk.
- The breasts become painfully full and so swollen that the milk can't come out.
- The baby may have difficulty latch on.
- Its best to try to prevent it by:
 - Nursing often – every 2-3 hours
 - Positioning and latching correctly

Recommended Treatment for Engorgement

Ask “What have you heard other mothers say about treating this problem? Be prepared to address treatments that are no longer recommended. A helpful statement is “Many of the ways you’ve mentioned have been used in the past. Current research has shown that the most effective ways are.....”: Mention the following if they don’t:

- Cover all of the breast and underarm area with an ice pack (a plastic bag filled with ice cubes or a bag of frozen vegetables such as corn or peas).
- After the breasts are softer, attempt to breastfeed. If unsuccessful, hand express or pump to remove some milk and soften the breast.
- Massage hard, full areas on the breast as baby nurses or while pumping.
- Repeat until the breasts are soft. May take several hours to get the breasts soft.
- If there’s no relief from ice, try soaking the breasts in very warm water in a sink.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol™) or ibuprofen (Advil™) for the pain.

Mastitis

Ask the group “What is mastitis and how does a mother know if she has it?” “Does a mother have to stop breastfeeding if she gets mastitis?” The group should mention some of the following points. If not, try to work them into the discussion.

- Causes a fever of 101° or more.
- The mother may feel like she has the “flu” – achy and tired.
- It usually affects only one side.
- The breast may be painful and have red streaks.
- ***The milk is not infected. Will not harm the infant. Keep breastfeeding.***

Recommended Treatment for Mastitis

- Call the doctor and report the symptoms. He may prescribe antibiotics.
- **Continue nursing** to keep breast empty and ensure faster recovery.
- Warm, wet soaks to breast several times a day until redness is gone.
- Rest as much as possible.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol™) or ibuprofen (Advil™) for fever and aching.

Cracked, Bleeding, or Very Sore Nipples:

Ask “Have you known any breastfeeding mother who had a problem with cracked or bleeding nipples?” The following points are helpful for moms:

- Happens during the first few days of nursing and is very painful.
- May be caused by incorrect positioning or latch.
- To help prevent this problem:
 - Learn correct positioning and latch on before the baby comes.
 - Get help in the hospital if the baby doesn’t latch on correctly.

Recommended Treatment for cracked/bleeding nipples

- Use a very warm, **wet** cloth on the nipples after nursing.
 - Then, apply lanolin or petroleum jelly to nipples.
 - Leave the lanolin or petroleum jelly on - don’t wash off for nursing.
- Take Acetaminophen (Tylenol™) or ibuprofen (Advil™) for pain.
- Pump or hand express if it’s too painful to nurse.
- Call a breastfeeding resource for more help.

Flat or Inverted Nipples

Demonstrate the pinch test, using the breast model. Ask “ What might happen when the nipples flatten like this?”

- The baby may have difficulty latching on.
- It helps if the mother knows ahead of time that the nipples are flat. (Show the picture and description of how to do the test in Breastfeeding: A Parent’s Guide.– *There are 2 editions. Both are OK, but have different page numbers.*

Recommended Treatment for flat /inverted nipples

- Ask the clinic lactation specialist recheck the pinch test if there’s a problem.
- Nurse as soon as possible after delivery.
- Pump prior to latch to make nipple more graspable.
- Use “football” or cross cradle hold.
- Get help from the Resource List

Plugged Duct

Pass around the breast model. Ask each participant to find the hard place in the breast. Then show them the inside of the model and point out the duct that makes the lump.

- Can happen anytime, but is more common in the later months of breastfeeding, especially if a usual feeding is missed.
- This kind of lump comes up suddenly (not like cancer that takes a long time) The edges of the lump are easily felt.
- The mother feels well and does not have fever.

Recommended Treatment for Plugged duct

- Soak the breast or nipple in very warm water in a sink or wash pan.
- Position baby for nursing so that the nose points to the hard lump.
- Massage the hard lump as baby nurses.

Yeast Infection

Ask the group if they've ever had athlete's foot or vaginal yeast infection. Ask "What did it feel like?" They should mention – itching, burning, pain. Make the statement "Yeast on the breast can be that uncomfortable."

- Yeast is passed to the mother from the baby's mouth. So both breasts are affected.
- The mother has pain that seems worse during nursing.
- Baby has thrush on the gums, tongue, or inside the cheeks.
- The skin on the breasts may be red, scaly, or peeling. Sometimes there's a cut at the base of the nipple.

Recommended Treatment for Yeast Infection:

- Take the baby to the doctor.
- Mom needs to be treated also. Can use an over the counter cream (Lotrimin).
- Call the local health unit lactation specialist for more help.

BREASTFEEDING LESSON PLAN #6

Summary statement:

Today you've learned about common breastfeeding problems. Know your resources and keep the list of phone numbers on your refrigerator so you can call for help.

Resource examples:

Local Health Unit CPA's – (Write the names on a board easel)

Little Rock Breastfeeding Helpline – 1-800 445-6175

Parents' Guide to Breastfeeding book