

Breastfeeding: Getting Started

Who: WIC Participants, mainly women, fathers or other support persons.

Why: Many newly pregnant women have very little knowledge of breastfeeding and have heard many stories about breastfeeding from friends and family.

Time: 20 mins

Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand the benefits of Breastfeeding for mom and baby
- Identify the key elements to a successful breastfeeding in the early weeks

Lesson

Overview:

1. Introduction
2. Benefits of Breastfeeding
3. Getting off to a good start
4. Closing

Materials: Booklet: “Breastfeeding: Keep it Simple” by Amy Spangler
Dry-erase board or flip chart
Markers
Beach ball

Introduction

- Arrange chairs in a semi-circle before participants enter classroom
- Welcome Participants
- Give overview of class session
- Introductions (make sure to include children in the introductions activity)

Example: “Good morning everybody! Welcome to Breastfeeding: Getting Started. This class talks about getting started breastfeeding as a new mom. The class is about 20 minutes long and we will use this time to share some ideas about learning how to breastfeed your newborn. Let’s introduce ourselves. I’m going to use this beach ball to help us with introductions. I will pass the beach ball around and when you get it say your name and your baby’s name. I’ll start: my name is _____ (pass the beach ball)”

 If preferred another icebreaker can be used



TIP: Use introductions as an icebreaker. Throw a silly question out there that is not related to the subject that you will be talking about. People will laugh and relax and this will increase class participation. Some examples of questions you can use are: “when you were a child, what did you want to do as a grown-up?”, “what’s your favorite salad dressing?”

Concept: Breastfed Babies Have a Decreased Risk of Illness

- **Essential Question:**
 - “What have you heard about the health of breastfed babies?”
- **Affirm answers from participants (i.e. “yes”, “that is very true”, “that’s a good one”, etc)**
- **Write answers on dry-erase board or flip chart**



FACTS ABOUT WHY BREASTMILK IS BETTER FOR BABIES:

For the best nutrition, breastmilk is the best food to feed a baby. It is made specifically to meet the nutritional needs of babies, and it changes as the baby grows to offer the best nutrients from birth and beyond. It has over 1000 components - many of these have not been duplicated in infant formula. Infant formula should be seen as an “alternative” for babies who cannot breastfeed, and not as an equal replacement.

Here’s why your breastmilk is better for baby:

- Babies who are fed formula have more diarrhea, constipation, and spitting up than breastfed babies.
- Formula does not have the special antibodies that helps protect babies from colds, flu, ear infections and other illnesses.
- Formula fed babies have more allergies than breastfed babies.
- Formula fed babies tend to gain more weight than breastfed babies

Concept: There are Many Benefits for the Breastfeeding Mom

- **Essential Question:**
 - “What have you heard about the health of breastfeeding mom?”
 - “What other advantages are there to breastfeeding?”
- **Affirm answers from participants (i.e. “yes”, “that is very true”, “that’s a good one”, etc)**
- **Write answers on dry-erase board or flip chart**



FACTS ABOUT WHY BREASTMILK IS BEST FOR MOMS AND FAMILIES:

Here’s why your breastmilk is better for mom:

- Helps the uterus return to normal faster after pregnancy. It also helps prevent heavy bleeding following birth
- Helps lose the weight gained during pregnancy
- Helps prevent breast cancer (and other types of cancer) in the mother
- Mothers who are breastfeeding miss fewer days of work because their babies don’t get sick as often
- Breastfeeding moms feel relaxed and peaceful while nursing because prolactin, a hormone, is released when baby is nursing. It helps you relax and have mothering feelings
- It helps mother bond with her baby. Breastfeeding moms often feel very close to their babies
- It is less expensive to breastfeed because families do not have to purchase high-priced formula, and also because breastfed babies are sick less often and they have to pay fewer doctor bills.

Concept: Getting Off to a Good Start is Key to Successful Breastfeeding

- **Essential Questions:**
 - “What are some ways that moms can get breastfeeding off to a good start?”
- **Listen and affirm participants answers**



FACTS ABOUT GETTING BREASTFEEDING OFF TO A GOOD START:

There are a number of simple steps that can help breastfeeding go well, starting right in pregnancy.

These steps are:

1. Read and take classes when pregnant to learn as much as possible about breastfeeding.
2. Have a natural birth if possible:
 - Mothers and babies recover more quickly from a vaginal, un-medicated birth
 - Babies have fewer breastfeeding problems
 - Mothers with c-sections can still breastfeed
3. Nurse as soon as possible after birth:
 - The babies suckling reflex is most intense during the first hour after birth
4. Offer the breast “on demand” or “on cue”
5. Wait to offer pacifiers or bottles:
 - Wait until breastfeeding is going well (usually when baby is 4 weeks old)
 - Some babies have trouble learning to breastfeed and bottle feed at the same time
6. Don’t offer supplemental formula feeding unless medically necessary
7. Get help when you need it!
8. Hold baby skin-to-skin, wear them in a sling or front carrier, and have them sleep in your room in a bassinet or crib.

Closing

- **Summarize:** “We have covered a lot of information about beginning breastfeeding. We talked about the decreased health risks of breastfed babies, the benefits to moms and families, and getting breastfeeding off to a good start, does anyone have any questions?”
- **Provide the booklet “Breastfeeding: Keep it Simple”**
- **Thank them for their participation and tell them that you look forward to seeing them soon**