

# Moms and Babies: Supporting Infant Feeding

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**Who:** Breastfeeding and Non-breastfeeding WIC moms with infants 1-4 months old

**Why:**

1. Parents need information for combining breastfeeding and work
2. Parents need information on safe formula preparation and self-paced bottle feeding.
3. Parents introduce solids too early and in improper order.
4. Parents (especially first time) want to know when to start solids and how.
5. Parents need information on normal infant sleep patterns.
6. New moms need information about care in post-partum period.

**Time:** 30 - 40 minutes

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## Objectives:

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

- Discuss ways to combine breastfeeding and work.
- Prepare infant formula safely per CDC and WHO recommendations
- Demonstrate self-paced bottle feeding
- Discuss timing & developmental cues for starting solids
- Discuss sequencing of food for babies
- Describe activity ideas
- Discuss ways to find personal time

## Lesson

### Overview:

1. Introduction
2. Concept: Combining breastfeeding and work
2. Concept: Safe Formula Preparation
3. Concept: Paced Bottle Feeding
4. Concept: Starting Solid Foods with Your Baby
5. Concept: Normal Infant Sleep
6. Concept: Taking Care of Mom
7. Closing

Can expand on or exclude topics based on time / participants' needs.

## Materials:

### Handouts:

- Break Time for Nursing mothers
- Safe Formula Preparation
- Paced Bottle Feeding
- Starting Your Baby on Solids (English and/or Spanish)
- Home Prepared Baby Food
- Baby Behavior Trifold (optional)

### Materials:

- Flip Chart or white board (if possible)
- Model Baby Doll
- Model bottle
- Model formula scooper for demonstration of safe formula preparation (optional)

## Introduction & Activity

[Have copies of each handout mentioned above within reach]

“Welcome to today’s class about taking care of mom and baby. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I will be leading class today.

“Today we will discuss:

- Tips for combining breastfeeding and work
- Tips for safely preparing formula if you are doing so
- An infant feeding technique called “paced bottle feeding”
- How to start offering solid foods to your baby
- An brief overview of normal infant sleep patterns
- Finding balance as a new mom

If possible, write the class topics on a white board or flip chart.

### Class Introductions

- Allow several minutes for class introductions. If class is large, consider using Option 2.

Option 1: “Let’s start class by finding out how many of you are new moms (and/or dads, grandparents) and how many of you are experienced moms (and/or dads, grandparents). Let’s go around the room and have each of you introduce yourself and tell us if this is your first baby or if you have other children.”

Option 2: “By a show of hands, how many of you are new moms (and/or dads, grandparents)? How many of you have other children?”

### Activity: True or False

“We’re going to start the class today with an activity. I’m going to read a statement and you tell me if it is true or false.”

1. When your baby has teeth, it’s time to stop breastfeeding.”

[Allow time for someone to raise hand]

Answer: False. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends babies be breastfed exclusively for six months, followed by the gradual inclusion of complimentary solids for year or beyond – as long as is desired by the mom and baby. Your baby may start teething as early as a three months. Also, if baby’s latched properly, your nipple goes beyond the teeth into the soft palate area of the baby’s mouth, so no pain should be felt.

2. Your baby will sleep longer if you put cereal in their bottle.

[Allow time for someone to raise hand]

Answer: False. We’ll talk more about this later, but all studies comparing the sleep of babies who have cereal in their bottle to those who are just breast or bottle fed show no difference in the amount that they sleep.

3. Once your baby begins solids, breast milk or formula is no longer an important source of nutrition for them.

[Allow time for someone to raise hand]

Answer: False. Breast milk or formula should still constitute the bulk of your baby's diet for the first year of life, in addition to gradually incorporating solids. Particularly for our moms who wish to breastfeed for one year or beyond, prioritizing breastfeeding will ensure your supply stays strong.

### Concept: Combining Breastfeeding and Work

"Let's start our discussion today with tips on how best to combine work and breastfeeding. Returning to work after having a baby can be a very difficult time for new parents. How many in the room will be or have already returned to work?"

[Wait for responses]

Of those who have returned to work, how many of you are breastfeeding?"

[Wait for responses]

One of the most critical parts of maintaining your supply when separated from your baby is the frequency of milk removal from your breasts. That's why it's important that a regular and consistent pumping schedule be maintained anytime you're separated from your baby, whether due to work, school, or other reasons.

Ideally, moms will want to remove milk from their breasts, either by breastfeeding directly or with the breast pump, as frequently as your baby nurses, or every 2-3 hours.

There is both a federal and state law which requires most employers to provide 'adequate time and space to express breast milk for one year following the birth of the infant'. That space **can not** be a bathroom. If your employer is not providing you time and space, make sure they are aware of the Break Time for Nursing Mothers provision and our new State law. We can provide information for you about that after class if needed.

What questions do you have about combining breastfeeding and work?"

### Concept: Safely Preparing Formula

"Now we're going to move onto safe formula preparation. Are there any families in here who are currently using formula?"

[Wait for responses]

We want to make sure everyone has received information about how to safely prepare your baby's formula. On the back of the formula can, you have probably seen that the instructions encourage the caregiver to ask your doctor if your water needs to be boiled. We want to be sure that all of our parents and grandparents know that powdered formula is a non-sterile substance, meaning that there is a very small possibility that there may be something in the formula that could make your baby sick.

[While holding the Formula Preparation handout, point to and read each step]

Because of this, based on the best current recommendations available to us, we encourage all parents to boil the water, let the water slightly cool and then mix the formula with the boiled but slightly cooled water. This will help make sure that anything harmful in the formula will be destroyed. After

mixing the formula, allow it to cool quickly by running bottle under water for two minutes until it reaches feeding temperature and feed it immediately.”

[With bottle and formula scooper (no formula or formula can) perform demonstration of formula preparation]

“If you would like one of these handouts, they will be available for each of you after the class.”

“What questions do you have about preparing formula?”

### Concept: Paced Bottle Feeding

“Now once you’ve prepared your baby’s bottle using either breast milk or formula, I’d like to show you the best way to hold your baby while you feed them. This is a technique called “paced bottle feeding” because it allows your baby to determine exactly how much food he or she receives from the bottle. By allowing your baby to follow their own hunger cues, you can prevent overfeeding and the post-feeding fussiness that can often come with it.”

[Take model doll baby and position them in paced bottle feeding (upright) position in your arms. Hold model bottle in free hand in a horizontal position to the baby]

“The best way to allow your baby to have control over the feeding is to hold them in a more upright position, like this.”

[Recline the model doll baby into the usual infant feeding position in your arms. Hold the bottle angled downward to the baby’s mouth]

“If you hold your baby like this, your baby will continue to swallow even if they’re not hungry because until they’re older, it’s very hard for them to stop the flow from the nipple on their own. So held like this they’ll often just continue to swallow, regardless of if they’re hungry, until the nipple is removed from their mouth.

[Bring model baby up to upright position in your arms]

“So instead you want to hold your baby more upright like this. You want to gently offer the nipple to your baby rather than forcing it into your baby’s mouth. Make sure the tip of the nipple is filled with liquid to ensure that your baby isn’t swallowing any air which could upset their tummy. And then you can allow your baby to drink until they are full.”

[Ask the group:] How do you think your baby can show you that they’re full?

[Wait for answers. Validate correct responses]

#### **Possible Answers:**

- Suck slower or stop sucking
- Relax his hands and arms
- Turn away from the nipple
- Push away
- Fall asleep

“Great answers. Most commonly our babies will show us that they’re full by turning their faces away or pushing the bottle away with their hands. You really want to try to avoid forcing your baby to take more than they want, just to finish the bottle.”

[Show Paced Bottle Feeding handout] “We have a helpful handout which review this information which will be available to everyone at the end of the class.”

“What questions to you have about paced bottle feeding?”

### **Concept: Starting Solid Foods with Your Baby**

“Now we’re going to move onto something that can often be a very exciting time for new parents, which is introducing solid foods to your baby. Who can tell me what age it is recommended for your baby to begin to eat foods other than breast milk or infant formula?”

[Wait for responses]

“The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies wait until about 6 months of age before they begin eating solid foods. Before 6 months of age it’s recommended that breast milk or formula be your baby’s only food.”

“Who can tell me signs that your baby might be ready to begin eating solid foods.”

[Wait for responses]

#### **Possible responses:**

- Can sit up with support
- Can hold up head up completely
- Keeps tongue back & down / loses tongue thrust
- Show interest in the food you’re eating

“You want to be sure your baby is doing these things before you begin feeding solids.”

“What are some ideas of what to first feed your baby?”

[Affirm positive responses, demonstrate the following possibilities on the “Starting Your Baby on Solids” handout:]

#### **Possible responses:**

- Iron fortified infant cereal
- Applesauce
- Pureed sweet potato / peaches / peas / banana / avocado.

“All of these are great ideas. One of the things we see most commonly with parents is putting infant cereal in their baby’s bottle, often hoping that it will help the baby sleep longer. We really want to discourage our families from doing this. Babies are born with a way of knowing exactly how much food they need, and putting cereal in their bottle disrupts this internal signal. Also, research has actually shown us that putting cereal in the bottle does not encourage babies to sleep longer. What we see is that parents often begin putting cereal in the bottle to try to get more sleep around 4 months of age,

which is about the same time that babies will naturally begin to start sleeping more. So while it may appear that it's the cereal that doing this, it's actually just the baby's natural development.

The last point that I'd like to make about sleep is that, even though it's really hard for parents when your baby wakes frequently during the night, it's actually very safe, healthy, and normal for babies to do this. Waking up at night allows them to get help if they're sick so that they can be tended to, and so they can let you know if they're too hot or too cold. We want our babies to be able to do these things. Gradually as your baby gets older they will sleep for longer and longer stretches of time.

When your baby is around 6 months of age and you're beginning to feed them solid foods with a spoon, you'll want to start with very small amounts of very well blended foods. You'll want to try just one new single-ingredient food at a time and wait about 3-5 days before starting each new food to make sure there are no reactions to any new food you try.

Each month you can gradually increase the thickness, texture, and variety of the foods.

"Can anybody tell me what foods you should avoid for the first few years of your baby's life?"

[Wait for responses]

**Possible answers:**

- Popcorn
- Uncut grapes
- Gum
- Hot dogs
- Candy (all of these can present a choking hazard.)

"What questions do you have about introducing solids to your baby?"

"We have two helpful handouts that will be available if you're interested after class. {Show "Starting Your Baby on Solids" (English and Spanish as appropriate) and "Home Prepared Baby Foods"}

### **FACTS ABOUT LIGHT AND DEEP SLEEP**

- Sleep patterns:
  - ✓ Birth to 6 weeks
    - Newborns sleep about 14 to 16 hours in a 24-hour period but only sleep a few hours at a time. **This is normal.**
    - During the first 6 weeks, a newborn baby's sleep is unpredictable. Newborns are still getting used to the new world around them and may mix-up days and nights.
  - ✓ 6 to 8 weeks
    - Baby may sleep more at night because they are awake more during the day.
    - Waking at night is still healthy and normal.
  - ✓ About 3 months
    - Longest stretch of sleep will be at night.
    - Baby may wake less often.
  - ✓ About 6 months
    - Baby is able to sleep up to 6 hours at one time.



### **TIPS FOR SLEEPY PARENTS**

New parents can expect to get less sleep. For the first several months, parents will sleep in 2 – 3 hour stretches. These tips will not help a baby sleep through the night because waking up at night is important for newborns' health. However, these tips will help parents get a little more sleep.



- 1. Keep your baby close to you at night**

Pediatricians recommend putting the crib or bassinet in the same room for the first few months. Parents won't have to go far when baby wakes up and needs something.
- 2. Try some "white noise"**

Play soft music or turn on a quiet fan. Parents will still be able to hear their baby when he really needs them, but won't wake them every time he moves.
- 3. Keep lights low**

Instruct parents to keep the lights low while feeding, burping or changing their baby's diaper during the night. This will help parents get back to sleep more quickly. Remind parents they do not want low lighting if they are doing something that requires their full attention - for example, giving their baby medicine.
- 4. Sleep when your baby sleeps**

Parents might think it is impossible for them to sleep while their baby sleeps but even 90 minutes of sleep can help them feel more rested.
- 5. Ask for help**

Taking care of an infant can be hard work. Encourage parents to ask family and friends for help at home.

## Concept: Taking Care of Mom

“Now that we’ve talked about taking care of your new baby, we can focus on your health & well-being. It’s important for you to take care of your health and wellness so that you’re able to care for your baby.”

“Can you think of some easy ways to exercise at home with your baby?”

[Listen and affirm responses. Provided responses below if not provided by participants.]

### Possible Answers:

- Soup cans as weights
- Marching or jogging in place
- Jump rope
- Stretching work
- Crunches
- Leg lifts
- Exercise videos

“What are some other ways you can take care of your health with a new baby?”

### Possible Answers:

- Drink lots of water
- Eat healthy foods
- Sleep when the baby sleeps
- Ask for help when needed

[Listen and affirm responses.]

“What are your questions about taking care of yourself while also caring for your baby?”

## Closing

“Today we covered a lot of information. We discussed combining work and breastfeeding, safely preparing formula for your baby and self-paced bottle feeding. We also talked about when and how to start your baby on solids. We talked about normal and healthy infant sleep patterns and, finally, how you can take care of yourself while also taking care of your baby.”

[Assist participants with setting a nutrition goal.]

“Take a minute to think about what we talked about today. Then, turn to your neighbor and discuss at least one thing that you want to remember and start doing.”

[Allow a few moments for participants to discuss with each other.]

“Would anyone like to share?”

“Are there any final questions or thoughts that you would like to share with us?”

[Thank participants for attending our “Supporting Infant Feeding” class. Remind them that WIC is a great resource if mom has questions or concerns about breastfeeding]

## Frequently Asked Questions for New Babies

Participants often have questions that are not addressed in the class outline or *Getting to Know Your Baby* brochure. These “frequently asked questions” will help answer participant’s questions that may come up during class discussions.

**1. What is the average length of time that babies sleep?**

Newborns sleep about 14 to 16 hours in a 24 hour period, but not all at one time. At 2 to 4 weeks of age young babies are able to sleep 2 to 4 hours at one time. By 6 to 8 weeks babies sleep more during the night time as they are awake more during the day. By 3 months of age babies are able to sleep up to 4 hours at one time and by 6 months babies may be able to sleep up to 6 hours at one time.

**2. When will babies sleep through the night?**

Babies sleep for longer stretches and wake less often during the night. Every baby is different, but 6-month-olds are mature enough to sleep up to 6-hours at one time. A 6-8 hour stretch of sleep is considered “sleeping through the night.” Keep in mind that each participant may have a different definition of “night”. Remind participants that even if their baby sleeps through the night for a few days or weeks, changes in the baby’s routine, sickness, growth spurts, or other things may cause night waking to occur again for a short time.

**3. How long does it take a baby to go into deep sleep?**

Newborns fall asleep in light sleep. About 20-30 minutes later, they go into deep sleep. Every baby is different, so look for signs of deep sleep to be sure. As babies get older, they will go from light sleep to deep sleep more quickly. By 4 months of age, many babies fall asleep in deep sleep.

**4. Do I have to lay my baby on his back to sleep?**

Doctors recommend that babies be put on their backs to sleep to help prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Young infants who sleep on their stomachs are at an increased risk for SIDS.

**5. Is it OK for my baby to sleep in my bed with me?**

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies sleep in the same room as their parent(s) but on a separate sleep surface.

**6. What should I do when my baby wakes up in the middle of the night and won’t go back to sleep?**

Acknowledge that this is difficult for parents but is normal baby behavior. During the first 6 weeks, a newborn’s sleep will be unpredictable, and he will not know the difference between day time and night time. Babies wake during the night because they need something. Find out what your baby needs (Is he hungry? Does he need a diaper change? Is he too hot or too cold? Is he uncomfortable? ) and take care of his needs. Keeping the lights low while you care for your baby will help you both get back to sleep more quickly. After your baby’s needs are met, speak softly, rock him gently and encourage him to go back to sleep. Your baby will wake less as he gets older.

**7. Why would you want to wake a sleeping baby?**

A parent may need to wake a young baby who is not waking to feed often enough. Call your doctor if you are concerned that your baby is sleeping too much.

**8. Is it bad to wake a baby who is in deep sleep?**

It is not harmful to wake a baby who is in deep sleep. If you need to wake your baby use a variety of sounds and touches. Be patient, it may take several minutes to wake a baby that is in deep sleep.

**9. When I lay my baby down and she wakes up right away, is it because she is used to being held all of the time?**

Remember that newborn babies fall asleep in light sleep. Because of this, they may startle and wake up when laid down while still in light sleep. This is normal. Wait for signs of deep sleep before laying your baby down.

**10. Is it good to let babies “cry it out” sometimes? Is it good for their lungs? Is it okay to let my baby cry herself to sleep? Am I spoiling my baby by picking her up when she cries?**

You may have heard many things about letting babies cry. Babies cry to communicate that they need something. Responding to a baby’s crying is simply taking care of her needs. Research shows that when parents respond to their babies’ cries, babies develop confidence that their world is safe and secure. You can’t spoil a baby by responding to her needs.

**11. What do I do if I can’t get my baby to stop crying?**

Babies cry to tell parents that they need their help. Try to figure out why your baby is crying and respond to her needs. If your baby continues to cry after you have taken care of her needs, hold her close and repeat the same action over and over, such as gently rocking or swaying. Be patient; calming a crying baby takes time. If you start to feel angry or overwhelmed, lay your baby down in a safe place for a few minutes and take a break. If you think your baby is crying too much, contact your baby’s doctor.

**12. What is a comfortable room temperature for my baby?**

If the room temperature is too hot or too cold for the parent, it may be too hot or too cold for the baby. If your baby is sweaty, he may be dressed too warmly or in too many blankets. Dress your baby in as many layers as you are wearing. Call your doctor if you have questions or concerns.

**13. How do I know if my baby is sick?**

Every baby is different and may show a wide variety of symptoms when sick. Common signs of illness include the following: fever (feel hot), skin color changes (very red cheeks, pale), increased crying, a change in sleep pattern, wheezing, problems breathing, blood in stools, diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, and/or a runny nose. There may be other symptoms. Call your baby’s doctor if you think your baby may be sick or call 911 if you need help right away.

**14. Is it good to swaddle your baby?**

There may be certain circumstances when swaddling is appropriate for very young infants. Swaddling may help calm very young babies, but swaddling older babies is discouraged. Swaddling limits your baby’s ability to move his body and gain strength and coordination. It also makes it hard for your baby to use his body to give you cues and limits your ability to read his cues.

**15. Can I use a bouncy seat or swing to help calm my baby?**

The best way to calm a crying baby is to hold your baby close to you and repeat the same words or actions over and over. Bouncy seats and swings also provide repetitive motions that can soothe babies. However, many seats and swings now come with sounds and music as well. Too many sounds can overwhelm your baby. It may be helpful to turn off the music and turn the swing to face the wall. Although this may seem boring to an adult, it is actually calming to a baby. Be careful not to overuse this equipment. In order to grow and develop, babies need time to move their bodies freely in a safe place.