

Breastfeeding: The Early Weeks

Who: WIC Participants, mainly postpartum women.

Why: Women who decide to breastfeed are more likely to quite in the first two weeks postpartum due to inadequate preparation, education and support.

Time: 20 mins

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

- State signs of an effective and ineffective latch
- Identify hunger cues of an infant
- Determine when and if baby is getting enough breast milk
- Identify common and treat simple breast discomforts for nursing moms

Lesson

Overview:

1. Introduction
2. Latching and Positioning
3. Hunger Cues
4. How to know if baby is getting enough
5. Closing

Materials: Handouts: 'Starting a Feeding', and 'Is My Baby Getting Enough Breastmilk?' On direction from Nutritionist/Dietitian: 'Diapers of the Breastfed Baby'
Video: "Better Breastfeeding" Sections 2 (Latching On and Positioning) and 4 (How Much Is Enough?)

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 Breastfeeding: The Early Weeks. This class talks about managing breastfeeding as a new mom. The class is about 20 minutes long and we will use this time to share some ideas about breastfeeding. 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: "if you could be an Olympic athlete for one day, what sport would you chose?", "if you could have any super-power, what power would you chose?"

Concept: Good Position and Latch Are Important Aspects to Successful Breastfeeding

- Essential Question:

- “Some of you have been breastfeeding for a few weeks now. So, how do you know if baby has a good latch? How about a bad latch? What signs should we look for?”
- **Affirm answers from participants (i.e. “yes”, “that is very true”, “that’s a good one”, etc)**
- **Write answers on the board**
- **Show “Better Breastfeeding” DVD – Section 2 (Latching On and Positioning)**



FACTS ABOUT LATCHING AND POSITIONING:

Positioning yourself and your baby to make it easy for your baby to latch on and breastfeed is an important aspect to successful breastfeeding. Finding the positions that are best for you is one of the most important ways to make breastfeeding work and to help moms be as comfortable as possible.

Correct latching is the single most important contributor to a good breastfeeding relationship. It may take a few feedings before you and your baby figure it out but patience is important here. Incorrect latch can lead to breastfeeding complications like sore nipples, engorgement and ineffective milk transfer.

Signs of a good latch:

- Wide open mouth with flanged lips, and chin touching breast
- More areola in baby’s mouth from the bottom rather than the top
- Baby’s ears and jaw move during sucking
- Feeling a strong tug at the breast that isn’t painful
- You can hear baby swallowing (a soft sound like “ca-ca”)

Signs of an ineffective latch:

- Baby’s mouth isn’t wide open
- Baby’s lips are curled inward
- Baby only has the nipple or small amount of breast in her mouth
- Mom feels pain during sucking
- You hear a clicking sound rather than swallowing sound

Concept: Feeding Patterns and Hunger Cues to Look For

- **Essential Questions:**
 - “How often do you think newborns need to eat?”
 - “How do we know baby is hungry?”
 - “What could crying mean besides hunger for a baby?”
- **Listen and affirm participants answers**



FACTS ABOUT HUNGER CUES:

Breastfed babies need to feed often. Newborns in particular have small stomachs and because breastmilk is so easily digested, they will need to feed more often than formula fed babies.

Newborns need to eat 8-12 times in 24 hours for these reasons:

- Their stomachs are small
- Breastmilk is the perfect milk for human babies and it’s digested very easily versus formula which is harder for babies to digest which is why they seem to stay fuller longer
- The more milk they take, the more milk you make
- Their main job is to grow which is why most babies double their weight by 4-5 months



FACTS ABOUT HUNGER CUES:

Although babies can’t talk, they will always show signs that they are hungry. Don’t wait until the baby starts to cry to feed him/her, they will make special movements and sounds to show they are hungry.

Concept: Knowing If Baby Got Enough Milk Is Important For Successful Breastfeeding

- **Essential Questions:**
 - “One of the most common concerns of breastfeeding moms is whether baby is getting enough to eat. So, how can we know that baby had enough breastmilk?”
- **Listen and affirm participants answers**
- **Show “Better Breastfeeding” DVD – Section 4 (How Much Is Enough?)**



FACTS ABOUT SATIETY CUES:

It's not uncommon to wonder if your baby is getting enough milk especially when nursing as moms can't exactly measure the amount of milk their infant intakes. If baby goes longer than 3-4 hours without feeding more than once a day, and isn't showing any of the signs of infant satiety, then you may need to have baby's weight checked.

Signs that baby is getting enough milk:

- Baby feeds 8-12 times every 24 hours
- Baby has an effective latch, with periods of rhythmic sucking and swallowing per feeding
- Baby has the right number and color or wet and dirty diapers
- Baby is gaining enough weight
- Baby seems calm and full after feedings
- Baby has periods of being wide-awake during the day
- Your breasts feel lighter and softer after feedings

Closing

- **Summarize:** “We have covered a lot of information about breastfeeding in the first few weeks of an infant's life. We talked about latching and positioning, hunger and satiety cues, does anyone have any questions?”
- **Provide the handout “What to Expect in the First Weeks of Breastfeeding”**
- **Thank them for their participation and tell them that you look forward to seeing them soon**