



TEN STEP TUESDAY

## Maximizing/Protecting Milk Supply

### It's Ten Step Tuesday!

Some mothers are having difficulty finding infant formula and other feeding supplies. Hospitals and clinics are fielding calls about the safety of homemade formula recipes because the shelves are bare. Pinterest is loaded with these recipes. There are many reasons to steer clear, but vulnerable new mothers may not realize how dangerous these can be. The conversations we have with families regarding their infant feeding choices are more important than ever. Families that previously combined breastfeeding and formula feeding, or exclusively formula fed, may be requesting additional information and support regarding exclusive breastfeeding.

#### What Might that Conversation Sound Like? So how do we talk about feeding options?

- Start by asking an open-ended question, such as: "Tell me what you know about breastfeeding."
- If the response is: "Oh, I'm not breastfeeding..." or "I'm going to do both..." use open-ended questions to further explore thinking, assumptions and experiences such as "Tell me about that. What was that like? How do you feel about that?"
- Use active listening and address knowledge gaps. Ask questions about how they made their decision and continue the conversation with: "I am here to ensure that you have all the information that you need. It is my job to make sure you are comfortable with your decision and you do not look back and say 'I wish someone would have told me about that.'"

#### Support with Education on the Value of Exclusive Breastfeeding

Combination feeding is associated with:

- Diminishing mother's milk supply
- Nipple/bottle preference over the breast
- Negatively altered newborn gut flora – more pathogenic bacteria
- Exposure to cow's milk proteins in formula increases likelihood of allergies
- Interferes with normal frequency of feedings
- Shortens duration of overall breastfeeding

Conversations will be unique to each individual. The most important thing is that at the end of the discussion, the mother is informed and feels supported in her decision.

If a mom DOES choose to give formula (or any supplement) be sure to talk with her about maximizing milk production using hand expression, pumping, offering the breast first, etc. During these uncertain times, the care and support we provide to infants and their families is more important than ever!

For more information contact

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