



# LACTATION INSIGHTS

**WELCOME** to the Winter, 2005 edition of Lactation Insights! This newsletter is written and published quarterly by Janet to support breastfeeding mothers and their families.

## **BABY'S FIRST FEEDINGS**

I have often repeated the benefits of breastfeeding to classes of interested students preparing for the birth of their baby. But I haven't really focused much attention on the importance of colostrum, which is the most valuable food that a baby will ever ingest.

Farmers know that without the protection of colostrum, newborn animals would die in a short time. Colostrum is necessary for survival in most of the animal kingdom.

Colostrum production begins in humans about halfway through pregnancy when the breasts begin producing it in preparation for the arrival of the new baby. After birth, a baby receives very small amounts of colostrum (about 1 teaspoon at a time) until the milk becomes more plentiful within 3 to 5 days. The new mother's milk continues to be a mixture of colostrum and mature milk for up to two weeks postpartum. Colostrum's small doses are designed for the human infant. These early feeds are easily digestible. The laxative qualities of colostrum encourage the passage of meconium, the baby's first stool. As meconium is expelled from the baby's intestines, his stomach grows in size to accommodate larger servings of human milk over the next 3 days. The milk of the mother also increases in quantity, as the baby is able to handle larger amounts of food.

Colostrum is a living fluid, resembling blood in its composition. It contains over 60 components, 30 of which are exclusive to human milk. Colostrum is rich in immunoglobulins, which protect infants from viruses and infections. The main immunoglobulin in human milk is secretory IgA which produces antibodies specifically to the pathogens that are in the mother's environment. The main function of secretory IgA is to "paint" the lining of the infant's stomach and intestines. These surfaces are then able to defend the baby against viruses and bacteria by not allowing pathogens to adhere to them. Some of these incredible immunoglobulins actually attack pathogens and kill them!

Colostrum contains high amounts of sodium, potassium, chloride, and cholesterol. This combination is believed to encourage optimal development of the infant's heart, brain, and central nervous system.

Colostrum is also high in protein, about three times more than in mature human milk. Protein is responsible for maintaining the baby's blood sugar level.

Colostrum is saturated with fat-soluble vitamins and minerals. It is often yellow or orange in color, reflecting the high levels of beta-carotene, one of the many antioxidants present. Antioxidants act as cell protectors in the infant's body and enhance his immune system.

Colostrum is vitally important for newborns. A newborn baby who is fed colostrum exclusively has an enormous

advantage over the artificially fed baby because of the protective immunities that are offered. All mothers should be encouraged to give their babies the very best start in life by breastfeeding early and often.

### **EGYPTIAN FLU**

There is a common illness called Egyptian flu. You feel rather ill at first, then you gain a lot of weight and 9 months later you turn into a mummy!

### **BREASTFEEDING IN PUBLIC**

I look forward to the day when breastfeeding in public will be considered as acceptable as bottle feeding. Legally, a mother has the right to meet her baby's needs whenever and wherever she may be. There is a law in Illinois that reads as follows:

**“A mother may breastfeed her baby in any location, public or private, where the mother is otherwise authorized to be, irrespective of whether the nipple of the mother’s breast is uncovered during or incidental to the breastfeeding; however, a mother considering whether to breastfeed her baby in a place of worship shall comport her behavior with the norms appropriate in that place of worship.”**

Unfortunately, some people in our society have a hard time accepting the premise that a baby has the right to receive food from his mother whenever he needs it. It seems more acceptable for a baby to “eat in the bathroom” when mom is away from home. How many of us would want to eat our dinner in a public restroom? It is ironic that our society seems to accept skimpy swimsuits, wet T-shirt contests, braless looks that leave nothing to the imagination, and cleavage down to the navel, but cringes at the thought of nursing a baby in public!

Every mother has the right to decide whether she is comfortable nursing in a public setting. In order to become more comfortable with the idea of public nursing, I suggest that you try nursing in front of a mirror at home. Usually very little is exposed during nursing, except perhaps for a brief moment when latching. A screaming, unhappy baby attracts a lot more attention in public than a quiet, peaceful, nursing baby.

If baby needs to eat while you are shopping at the mall, simply take a few new items of clothing off the rack and head for the dressing room as if you are going to try them on. Then make yourself comfortable and nurse in a dressing room where you probably won't be disturbed for a while.

Nursing our babies should give us freedom from the confinement of our homes without unduly offending other people. In other countries, nursing in public is commonplace and accepted as “normal”.

### **BREASTFEEDING RATES IN NORWAY**

In Norway, promotion of artificial infant feeding does **not** occur. Ninety-eight percent of mothers leaving the hospital are breastfeeding. After 3 months, 90% are still breastfeeding. What a wonderful support system!

### **SAVING MONEY**

“It has been estimated that at least 29 million dollars could be saved annually if mothers would breastfeed for just one month.”- US Department of Agriculture

*Janet Talmadge, IBCLC*  
*Lactation Innovation*  
*www.lactationinnovation.com*  
*(630) 357-0028*