



# LACTATION INSIGHTS

**WELCOME** to the Fall, 2006 edition of Lactation Insights! This newsletter is written and published quarterly by Janet to support breastfeeding mothers and their families.

## **NEW GROWTH CHARTS FOR BREASTFED BABIES!**

The World Health Organization recently released new infant growth charts for breastfed babies. All health care providers have been advised to begin using them as a standard part of their assessment for monitoring infant and child growth.

The new growth charts replace the decades old charts that were based on a small sample of exclusive formula-fed infants. The old growth charts have set up inaccurate standards for child growth and, in the process, may have contributed to both lower rates of breastfeeding and to childhood obesity around the world. Research studies show that formula fed infants tend to gain excessive weight because of their greater food intake.

The WHO recommends that babies receive nothing but breastmilk for the first 6 months of life, with continued breastfeeding once complementary foods begin for at least 2 years.

## **COMPARISON OF THE OLD AND NEW GROWTH CHARTS:**

- The existing weight requirements for two and three-year-olds were 15 to 20% too high.
- The formula-fed standard put a healthy one-year-old between 22.5 and 28.5 lbs, whereas the healthy breastfed infant weighs in at between 21 and 26 lbs.

- The differences in growth rates and patterns between exclusively breastfed and formula-fed infants become evident at the early age of two to three months.
- The survey's highly compelling results show that it is not the breastfed infant who is not growing well, but the formula-fed infant who is fed too much and consequently gains too quickly.
- The daily energy intake for babies should be about 7% less than current levels.

## **DRINKING ALCOHOL WHILE BREASTFEEDING?**

Women are warned not to consume alcohol during pregnancy because of the risks to the unborn child. But questions about alcohol consumption while breastfeeding often lead mothers to conflicting information about whether or not it has an affect on their nursing baby.

According to La Leche League, "The effects of alcohol on the breastfeeding baby are directly related to the amount the mother ingests. When the breast-feeding mother drinks occasionally or limits her consumption to one drink or less per day, the amount of alcohol her baby receives has not been proven to be harmful."

*The Breastfeeding Answer Book* says, "Alcohol passes freely into mother's milk and has been found to peak about 30 to 60 minutes after consumption, 60 to 90 minutes when taken with food. Alcohol also freely passes **out** of a mother's milk and her system. It takes a 120 pound woman about 2-3 hours to eliminate one serving of wine or beer from her body.

The more alcohol that is consumed, the longer it takes to be eliminated. The effects of alcohol on the breastfeeding baby are directly related to the amount the mother consumes.”

Mothers often ask me if they have to “pump and dump” their milk after consuming an alcoholic beverage. The answer is “no”. Alcohol is not “trapped” in breastmilk (it returns to the bloodstream as mother’s blood alcohol level declines), so pumping and dumping will not remove it. Practices like pumping and dumping, drinking a lot of water, resting or drinking coffee will not speed up the rate of elimination of alcohol from the body.

Dr. Jack Newman says, “Reasonable alcohol intake should not be discouraged at all. As is the case with most drugs, very little alcohol comes out in the milk. The mother can take some alcohol and continue breastfeeding as she normally does. Prohibiting alcohol is another way we make life unnecessarily restrictive for nursing mothers.”

If consuming alcohol while breastfeeding is concerning to you, consider enjoying a non-alcoholic beverage instead. Any drink is more fun with an umbrella in it!

### **“GEE WHIZ FACTS ABOUT BREASTFEEDING**

Human milk has over 300 ingredients including interferon, white blood cells, antibacterial, and antiviral agents. Formula has only 40 ingredients.

Human milk has been shown to kill cancer cells in a laboratory dish and has been used in oncology research.

The human breast “custom-makes” antibodies to fight whatever pathogen the infant is exposed to in the environment.

Breastmilk has been used to treat eye infections, ear infection, pimples, warts,

cold sores, nail fungus **and** it prevents infection in scrapes and scratches.

In some parts of the world, donated organs are bathed in breastmilk for the protective factors.

There have been over 25 “significant” recalls of formula for potentially life-threatening situation.

Human milk lactoferrin is patented for use in killing E. coli in the meat packing industry.

Donor milk is being used to treat malabsorption and short-gut syndromes, renal failure, inborn errors of metabolism, ulcerative colitis, irritable bowel syndrome, immunodeficiency diseases, burn cases, cardiac problems; and infectious diseases such as intractable diarrhea, gastroenteritis, infantile botulism, sepsis, pneumonia, and hemorrhagic conjunctivitis in both children and adults.

Adoptive moms, grandmothers, and yes even men (!) have been able to lactate for an infant.

And my husband’s personal favorite: breastmilk comes in attractive reusable containers that never need sterilizing!

### **PUMPING AT WORK**

Four or five months after returning to work, some mothers find they have a delayed let-down when pumping. I’ve found that the SoftFit™ Breastshields from Medela can really help with that. It is important to keep trying different strategies when pumping to keep your milk supply plentiful for baby. For more useful tips on maintaining your milk supply, visit my website and look under the heading: “Breastfeeding Q & A”.

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