



LACTATION INSIGHTS

WELCOME to the Winter, 2007 edition of Lactation Insights! This newsletter is written and published quarterly by Janet to support breastfeeding mothers and their families.

MOTHER'S FISH OIL INTAKE BENEFITS KIDS' BRAINS

The omega-3 fatty acid called DHA, which occurs in significant amounts only in fish oil and mothers' milk, dominates the structures of human brains and retinas and is essential to their development and functioning.

A new study from Australia adds significant new evidence that infants' brains benefit when their mothers take fish oil during pregnancy. The study also indicates a down side to excessive consumption of the omega-6 fatty acids consumed in gross excess by most Americans. The omega-6 fatty acids compete with the omega-3s in fish oil for inclusion in human cell membranes. Omega-6 fatty acids are abundant in most vegetable oils like corn, soy, canola etc. Extra Virgin Olive oil is the exception because it is primarily composed of Omega-9's which don't upset the critical omega-6 to omega-3 ratio. Corn, soy and canola vegetable oils (especially hydrogenated oils) are the ones most commonly used in packaged and processed foods and in our salad dressings. Read the ingredient labels yourself.

Researchers at the University of Western Australia conducted a well-designed (double-blind, randomized placebo-controlled) clinical trial among 83 non-smoking women who agreed to eat no

more than two portions of fish per week. Some of the participating women received placebo capsules containing 4 grams of olive oil, while the others were given capsules containing 4 grams of fish oil. The supplement regime began at 20 weeks after conception and continued until delivery.

The infants were examined and tested when they were 2 ½ years old to evaluate their language skills, behavior, practical reasoning capacity, and hand-eye coordination.

The children of mothers who had taken fish oil supplements displayed significantly better hand-eye coordination, scored higher on measures of vocabulary and language comprehension, and the average phrase-length of their speech was longer. It was clear the omega-3s in the fish oil were responsible, since improved good hand-eye coordination also correlated with high levels of omega-3s in umbilical cords at birth.

*It is important to note that the children with higher tissue levels of omega-6 fatty acids had the lowest scores: a finding that offers further evidence that vegetable oils can be counterproductive when consumed in excess.

COUGH REMEDIES

Winter is a time when coughs and colds can plague us. Nursing mothers and their children often find themselves unable to sleep peacefully at night because of nagging coughs that prevent them from having a restful night's sleep. The following suggestions should help everyone in the family.

First it is important to change the diet while colds and flu are in the family. In our house, that means no sugar (which weakens the immune system), and no cow's milk products (which increase production of mucus in the body).

It is also important to moisturize the environment to keep the mucus in the upper respiratory tract from becoming thick and sticky. That means plenty of drinks of water, tea, warm lemon water (which helps loosen phlegm and relieve congestion), or other appropriate fluids. The nursing baby needs to continue with lots of breastmilk intake. (Breastmilk is the exception to the "no milk products rule"). Adding moisture to the air with a vaporizer can help bring moisture to the lungs and enables adults and children to expel the mucus more effectively when they cough.

It is important not to mask a productive cough with over-the-counter cough preparations that deaden the nervous reflex and stop the coughing. The cough is not the problem. The cough is the body's attempt to solve the problem. Congested mucus needs to be expelled from the body. One of my favorite (all natural) herbal cough expectorants is called **ALJ**.

If you or your children aren't getting over a cough, I carry **ALJ** herbal cough syrup. **ALJ** can be used for any respiratory ailment, including allergies, sinus problems, coughs, congestion, bronchitis, hay fever, pneumonia etc. The ingredients in **ALJ** are boneset, horseradish, mullein, fennel and fenugreek. These herbs work together to help to break up hardened mucous in the lungs and sinuses and stimulate their expulsion from the body.

Kids don't mind the taste. **ALJ** is one of the best all around formulas for almost

any type of respiratory problem. A pharmacist told me she has never seen any other product work as well for her husband and kids' coughs as **ALJ**!

NEW MOMS AND NEWBORNS NEED PRIVACY IN HOSPITAL

Hospitals are beginning to recognize that lack of privacy can get breastfeeding off to a rocky start. Hospitals are also finding that lack of sleep might play a role in postpartum depression.

A study in the latest *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, and Neonatal Nursing* found that women typically experienced dozens of interruptions during their first day after delivering a baby. Researchers recorded the number and duration of visits and phone calls from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. for 29 brand-new moms who intended to breastfeed. During that period, the mothers on average experienced 54 visits or phone calls, averaging 17 minutes in length. These same new mothers were alone with their baby (or their baby and the baby's father) only 24 times on average, and half of those episodes were 9 minutes or less.

Concerns about how the hospital environment affects breastfeeding led to this research. One of the researchers said, "They need to breastfeed immediately after delivery and then very, very frequently in the first 3 or 4 days. They can't do that if they don't have private time."

Some hospitals are now starting an instituted "nap time" in the afternoon when the lights are dimmed and visits from friends, staff and family members are discouraged.

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