



LACTATION INSIGHTS

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

BPA FOUND IN SOME PLASTICS: A CONCERN FOR PARENTS?

An estrogen-like compound widely used in plastic products has been shown to be potentially harmful to human health. The compound, bisphenol A (BPA), is one of the most-produced chemicals in the world. It has been in the news recently in conjunction with a meeting of 15 scientists convened by the National Institute of Environmental Health and Sciences to evaluate the scientific literature about BPA.

BPA is found in polycarbonate which is a hard, clear plastic used to make plastic baby bottles, sports bottles, large water cooler containers, microwave-oven containers etc. The problem with BPA is that the chemical bonds that BPA forms in plastic can unravel when heated, washed or exposed to acidic foods.

BPA mimics the sex hormone estradiol, which can trigger profound changes in the body. The problems associated with small amounts of BPA exposure (among mice and rats) include: hyperactivity, early puberty, increased fat formation, abnormal sexual behavior, disrupted reproductive cycles, and structural damage to the brain.

The concern of many scientists is that human fetuses may be exposed to this

chemical in utero, or infants may be exposed to this chemical through plastic baby bottles, plastic dishes and toys.

You can reduce your family's exposure to BPA by only using glass or stainless steel containers for drinking water. Give your baby natural fabric or wooden toys instead of plastic ones. Store your food and beverages in glass (or Corningware), not plastic containers. Avoid using plastic wrap (and never microwave anything covered in it).

If you opt to use plastic containers for your food, be sure to avoid those marked on the bottom with the recycling label #7 as this variety most likely contains BPA. Instead look for the recycling labels #1, #2, #4 and #5 (which do not contain BPA).

*Note: All of the breastshields and plastic containers made by Medela, have always been made of polypropylene, which is free of BPA. You may contact me if you would like to purchase baby bottles made by Medela.

NEW GROWTH CHARTS

New infant growth charts were released last year, based upon babies who were exclusively breastfed for 6 months, with continued breastfeeding for at least 2 years. Sources of data collection were taken from 6 cities around the world. Thirty indicators of growth were measured at regular intervals for all the samples. The measurement and standardization protocols were scientifically applied to this cross-cultural, field-based project.

These growth charts were released last year and are designed to be the norm for infant growth, yet they are not being widely used in the United States. Why? Because the formula-fed kids will start showing up as overweight very early on! **The formula industry does NOT want these charts used.**

For decades, breastfeeding mothers have been tormented by the growth charts because their babies were deemed to be growing “wrong” and had to be supplemented. Now the shoe is on the other foot, and the formula industry is fighting hard and running scared.

The fact is that if babies aren’t breastfed, they are 25% more likely to be overweight or obese. Knowing that breastfed babies grow differently, we need to encourage health care providers to use these new charts. Ask about them at your baby’s next check-up!

ALFALFA

Alfalfa is a legume related to beans and peas. It is very nutrient-rich because the roots of the alfalfa plant grow deep into the ground (sometimes over 40 feet) so it can pick up minerals that other plants can’t reach. These minerals make alfalfa a storehouse of nutrients for both animals and people.

In western herbalism, alfalfa is used to both cleanse and rebuild the blood, to improve digestion, and **promote lactation**. Alfalfa indirectly aids the pituitary gland by helping with the release of hormones responsible for metabolism and growth, blood pressure, water regulation, **breastmilk production**, and thyroid function.

Alfalfa can help build the blood in cases of anemia. Pregnant women with anemia have taken alfalfa to rapidly increase their blood iron levels without the constipation caused by ordinary iron

supplements. Part of the reason alfalfa is helpful for the blood is because of its high chlorophyll content. Chlorophyll stimulates bone marrow to produce hemoglobin, the blood cell that carries oxygen to all cells and tissues of the body.

Alfalfa is rich in antioxidant flavonoids which help reduce arthritis and other conditions associated with inflammation. Alfalfa is sometimes included in respiratory formulas because the vitamin K and chlorophyll can help in the treatment of hay fever and soothe irritated mucus membranes.

If you would like to learn more about how alfalfa supports healthy breastmilk production, give Janet a call.

LEARNING TO COOK

Not many years ago, I was daunted by the task of preparing meals for my family of 6. I learned that meals prepared at home require a lot of work and planning, but they provide more nutrition and cost pennies as compared to eating out at restaurants or purchasing pre-packaged foods. In the past 5-6 years, I have become more adventurous in my cooking, much to my family’s delight. My son-in-law loves to come to our house, especially for the home-cooked food!

I always double the amount of food I am cooking in a complicated recipe. Then I can recoup my investment of time and eat this wonderful dish again later in the week (or pull it out of the freezer on a hectic day)!

CUTE BUMPER STICKER:

“I make breastmilk, what’s your superpower?”

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