

All those breastfeeding myths!!!!

And what Can we do about them?

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- Fort Wayne, IN
- IN WIC since 1989
- IL WIC since 2008

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We have heard so many of them

- Some are more commonly recited than others
- Some have been around forever
- But where do they come from?

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Colostrum is bad

- No milk or colostrum is bad
- Been around since at least 980 AD
- Thought to be toxic
- And it just sounds “different”
 - Is it even milk?

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My breasts will sag

- Well, yes but the real cause is pregnancy
- Became more prevalent in the 17th and 18th century
- More focus on the sexuality of the breast

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I don't/won't have any milk

- Women did struggle with concerns historically
- But became a powerful belief beginning around 1900
- Coincidentally about the time formula became widely marketed
- Hmmm

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No one in my family made enough milk

- What so many hear from family members
- It just did not work
- Quick to offer formula to “help”
- Rarely received correct information
- Many times formula was encouraged by health professionals as better
- As early as 1938, ‘many women could not produce enough milk”

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You need to drink a lot of water

- Major component in milk
- Drink to thirst
- **Common Myth:** Increase in intake increases volume
- Too much water can decrease production
- Web pages emphasize increased water intake when Breastfeeding leading to wrong assumptions or misinformation on the web
- Moms will eliminate hormones if too much water
 - Olsen 1939, Illingworth 1953, Dusdicker 1985, 1994

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Oatmeal will increase milk supply

- So many ideas of foods that will build milk supply
- Momjunction.com 31 foods to increase milk supply
 - Oatmeal, barley, apricots, carrots, fenugreek, garlic, alfalfa, fennel, cumin seed
 - Green leafy vegetables, bitter melon, salmon, moringa, blessed thistle, chick pea
 - Tofu, holy basil, sesame seeds, almonds, flaxseed, ginger, brewers yeast, pumpkin seeds
 - Dill seeds, curry leaves, sweet potato leaves, turmeric, papaya, dates, poppy seeds, brown rice
 - Decrease milk supply: sage parsley, peppermint, chasteberry, alcohol (??) caffeine

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How about blue Gatorade?

- We have heard this one
- Personal testimonies
- No ingredients that might work except perhaps potassium to combat dehydration
- There are healthier drinks out there
 - Marasco, *Making more milk*, 2020

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Chocolate will decrease milk supply

- Or cause a fussy baby
- Previously thought caffeine would cause fussiness
- But you need to eat a pound a day to meet levels to even possibly transfer caffeine to baby

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I can't breastfeed in public

- Really??
- Modesty
- Sexuality
- Options?
- accepting breastfeeding as the norm

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My doctor told me to stop breastfeeding

- Or told me to supplement
- So many things like Jaundice or poor weight gain
- Start with how the parent feels about this information

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I have small/large breasts

- So I can't breastfeed
- What does size have to do with it?
- Breast size is related to fat tissue not milk making tissue
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You either breastfeed or not

- If you formula feed your choice is limited
- Not true with breastfeeding

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Breastfeeding is inconvenient

- Best product
- Perfect temperature
- Already prepared
- Always available

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I am so busy or stressed

- This will spoil my milk
- Or I won't make enough milk
- Examples of tremendous stress
 - Famine
 - war

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The sun or Stress will spoil the milk

- This comes from how we handle cow's milk
- Human milk is kept at the right temperature and always available
- Stress does not cause it to curdle and or spoil

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Medications mother takes will affect baby

- Not usually
- Great resource, medications and mother's milk by Thomas hale

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I have.....Name an Illness

- So I can't breastfeed
- Viruses and bacteria does not transfer through the milk

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I have COVID so I can't because I will my baby sick

- Spread through droplets
- Not through the milk
- Actually milk provides protection!
- components fight infection
- Research use milk to treat and fight disease

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Human milk is a bodily fluid

- Handle with care at day care
- Eeeewww factor
- Human milk is less fragile than formula
- Full of antibodies

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Breastfeeding is hard

- Bottle feeding is easy/convenient
- Perpetuated by formula manufacturers
- Others can feed the baby
 - While you do what? Clean? Do dishes?

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Baby will not latch, Doesn't like me

- Babies are born to breastfeed
- All of their reflexes are there to do "their 2 jobs"
 - Breathe and eat, to survive
- Hardwired to get to the breast
- Interventions at birth
- Go back to the beginning and basics
 - Skin to skin
 - Laid back

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My baby will never take a bottle

- Really?
- Is this a developmental step that all babies must achieve?
- Or must have one in hospital

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I can't eat a favorite food

- Or I have to eat a healthy/special diet
- Which foods have you heard?

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Moms have to eat special foods

- Chicken and rice
- Hot or cold foods
- Nutritious foods
- Vitamin supplements
- Many are VERY cultural

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Lots of cultural beliefs too

- Teas
- No sexual activity while breastfeeding
- Stress, nerves will spoil or dry up milk
- Cold back will spoil milk

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So what can we do?

We just discussed the correct information but.....

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Logic and education are not the answer

- You need to win their confidence
- You can weave the logic in, but do not depend on it

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Theory of Planned Behavior

- Attitude: achieve desired outcome
- Subjective norm: Considered worthwhile by others
- Control: easy to perform
 - “I can do it”

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What works

- Building relationships
- Goal setting
- Prenatal education
- Postpartum support and availability

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First Things First: Connection Before Content

“People don’t care what you know
until they know you care.” --Anonymous

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Motivational interviewing: OARS

- Achieve by:
- Open ended questions
- Affirmation
- Reflective listening
- Summarizing

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What is important to the parent?

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Start With Heart

- Tie messages to what parents value:
 - Being close to baby
 - Being good mothers
 - Sense of success
 - Happiness
 - Having their children love them
 - Healthy baby

Pennsylvania WIC State Agency

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How can you use motivational interviewing to help

- You are not forcing a person into change
 - Making someone breastfeed
- You are guiding
- Listening more than telling
- Tapping into what they have or believe to achieve what they want
- You are activating what they already need or want
 - Health of baby
- Connecting them with what the parents care about
 - bonding, love, happy baby

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What is important to the parent?

Bonding?**Health?**

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Listen...

- Show interest
- Reflect on the comments
- Peel back the layers of the problem

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Open ended questions

- Get the real information
- There can be NO yes or no answers
- Where she really is at
- What are the concerns?
- How?
- What?
- Why?
- Share with me

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Suggestions

- Rather than judgement
- Or comments
- Assessing the comfort level

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Avoid judgement

- Fear saying the wrong answer
- Will say nothing
- Examples of judgmental words
 - Right
 - Wrong
 - Bad
 - Good
 - Enough
 - Proper
 - Adequate

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Praise the parent

- What is she doing right
- It is so easy to doubt
- Feel guilty
- Feel like we are not doing anything right
- Needs to hear what we are doing right
- There are those days.....

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Identify

- What is important for parent to achieve?
 - Biological norm
- Worthwhile for parent and support people?
- Easy to perform? (convenient)

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When the answer is uncertain, negative

- Or I am not sure
- Then identify or “flag” for education
- Postpartum support
- Both periods of intervention are more effective

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Setting goals

- What does she want to achieve?
- What is most important?
- What will work?

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- How?
- What?
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“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.”

Stephen R. Covey
(1932-2012)
InspirationBoost.com

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Incorporate those support people

Grandma

Partner

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What is important

Approval

Advocacy

- Support
- advocacy

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Important to discuss those myths

- Will they help?
- Frame them with logical assistance
- Tell me more about why colostrum is bad?
- What do you fear?
- How do you think it may have a purpose/reason to be there?
- Or There is no milk in the beginning
 - Help mom to express some
 - Visual image of liquid gold

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Tell me more about foods you cannot eat

- Why do you think they would affect the baby?
- How do you think they would affect the baby
- Or she has a list of foods, “how do you feel about that list?”

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Up your counseling skills to get to the finish line

- Ask more open ended questions
- Remember 20 second rule
 - People only listen to first 20 seconds
- Keep discussion more about the parent
- Mention their name
- Active listening to truly tune in to what the other person is saying
- Gift of your undivided attention

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Up your counseling skills to achieve your goals

- Verbal and non verbal acknowledgment
 - I understand
- Show empathy
- Disagree politely
- Agree to disagree

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Help parents to be part of the solution

- Ask
- Explore
- Develop a plan
- Include all
- Summarize

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Achieve your goals for
your baby
Goal cards as a reminder

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Success is all about confidence

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