

Mother Knows Breast: Helping Moms Gain Confidence in their Milk Production

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Learning Objectives:

1. Identify common beliefs about milk production among mothers.
2. Name key factors involved in establishing a healthy milk production.
3. Identify ways to help mothers build confidence in their milk production.

Beliefs about Milk Production

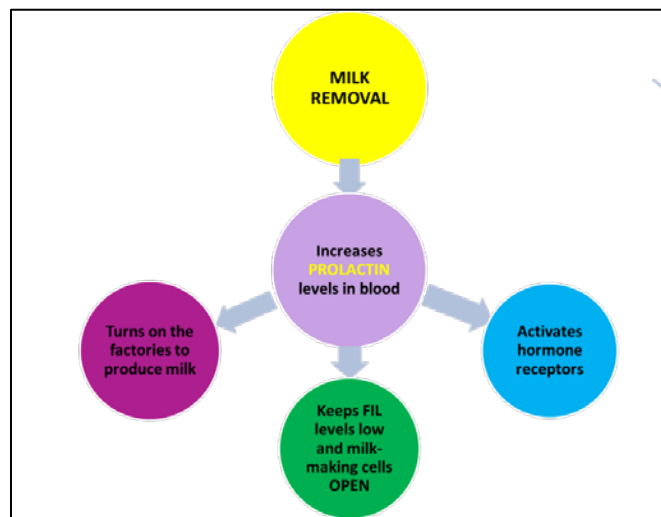
- Concern about milk production is the #1 reason women give for beginning formula, and for weaning at every critical weaning period. *(McLeod 2002; Lewallen 2006)*
- Over half of women believe they are not making enough milk. And the issue is not constrained to the U.S. It is a global concern.
- Over half of breastfeeding women say they are discharged from the hospital without professional assistance. *(Lewallen 2006)*
- Myths about milk production abound

Why Women Doubt Their Milk Production

- You can't see what the baby is taking
- Hospital practices
- Baby is fussy
- Baby does not sleep well at night
- Mom used a breast pump and got little milk
- Mother is separated from her baby
- Mother really DOES have physiological issues impacting her production

Teaching Mothers How Their Breasts Make Milk

1. Formula for Healthy Milk Production [West & Marasco 2009]
2. Breast changes during pregnancy
3. Milk factories
 - Milk-making cells (alveoli) develop during pregnancy
 - Alveoli bunch into 7-10 clusters or lobes
 - Muscles (myoepithelial cells) tighten to release milk
4. Milk highway system – transports milk through the breast
5. Hormone receptors
6. Milk removal (especially EARLY milk removal) drives the system
7. The opposite (full breasts) slows things down!
 - FIL levels rise
 - Internal pressure reduces blood flow
 - Milk cells are compressed
 - Breast tissue begins involution



Tools for Health Professionals

- Breast compression
- Mom's Own Milk (M.O.M.) at the breast

Tools that Build Confidence

- Simple language
- Measuring devices
- "Pour Offs"
- Everyday gadgets and analogies



Understanding Normal Infant Behaviors

Secrets of Baby Behavior – www.secretsofbabybehavior.com

- Infant states
 - Crying
 - Irritability
 - Quiet alert
 - Drowsy
 - Active sleep
 - Deep sleep
- Why babies cry and fuss

- Common reasons why infants cry besides hunger
- Soothing techniques
- Why babies sleep
 - Normal infant sleep cycle
 - What is happening in light vs. deep sleep

Counseling Mothers who Want to Supplement

- Ask the right questions
- Never make assumptions; look for hidden motives
- Examine the evidence
- Use critical thinking to draw conclusions
- If in doubt, REFER!

Moms Who Just Want to Pump

- Reasons mothers may want to pump
- Impact of just pumping on a mother's milk production
- Counseling mothers who just want to pump

Talking with New Moms

- During early weeks many mothers report difficulty following instructions, remembering facts, and keeping track of time – all governed by left brain. [Eidelman 1993]
- Mothers have enhanced RIGHT brain capacity – perhaps to connect with baby [Schore 2001]
- Tune in to the mother's EMOTIONS
- Teach her why her baby fusses and cries.
- Affirm! Affirm! Affirm!
- Show her what she is doing right.
- Show her how her baby loves her.
- Power of praise!



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