Lesson #3: How to Encourage and Support Mom’s Milk Production
Objectives

- Remind mom why she’s pumping!
- Maternal nutrition and health
- How to help mom make more milk
- Mother’s goals
- Pumping tips
- Keeping track of milk volume and volume goals
- MOMS milk tracking system
- How to provide support for moms
Why is human milk so important for preemies? Facts about this ‘liquid gold’

• **Brain development** and **cognitive function** is enhanced.

  ✓ Studies show that for every ½ ounce (3 teaspoons) of mom’s milk that baby gets in the NICU, the baby’s IQ goes up by 1/2 point.

• **Overall health** (as evidenced by hospitalizations) is enhanced.

  ✓ Studies show that the chance of being readmitted to the hospital (in the 2 ½ years after NICU discharge) goes down significantly when babies are given mostly human milk in the NICU.
Pumping prep...what mom needs to know from the outset.

- If mom **fools her breasts** into thinking a baby is nursing frequently (by pumping every 3 hours), she will almost always make enough milk.
  - Otherwise, milk production will turn off (it can be hard to get it back).
- In a situation in which many moms feel helpless, providing human milk is one incredible way mom can **directly help her preemie** (see next 2 slides!).
  - Emphasize that **no one except mom can do this** for her preemie!
- There is great benefit of getting **dad or maternal grandmother involved**
  - S/he can provide much needed care, support, and encouragement to help mom continue providing milk.
Helping Mom Make Milk

• Make sure mom has all the necessary information and equipment.

• Encourage mom to pump as soon as possible after delivery (even in the first hour).

• Mom’s partner can help if mom is not feeling well and can make partner feel part of and invested in the process/parenting.

• Keep pumping 7-8 times a day (at least once at night).

• Use a hospital-grade pump.

• Keep track of milk volumes.

• Pump at baby’s bedside.

• Hold the baby skin-to-skin.
More tips to help mom make milk

• If mom has other children, encourage mom to pump before leaving the NICU (this allows mom more time to spend with children at home).

• Mom may want to get a back-up pump (manual or electric) for times when she is away from her pump

• Avoid full breasts

• Know that one breast usually makes more than the other

• Avoid going long stretches without pumping

• Consider herbal or prescription medication for low production challenges (mom can talk to our Lactation Consultant)

• Do not compare your pumping to anyone else – every body is different!

• After the first 2 weeks, we can sometimes let mom stretch pumping to every 4 hours and even sleeping all night (if her volume holds steady)
If Mom wants to increase her supply...

- Pump at least 7 times per day for 15-20 minutes (one of these times at night)
  - Keep pumping for 2-3 minutes after milk flow slows
  - Pump a bit longer if your supply is low
  - She can also try power pumping if she wants to increase her supply; pump while watching TV (pump during commercials, rest during the show)
  - She can try the Preemie Plus card when she visits baby in the NICU

- If a mom is having pain with pumping let us know so we can try to help out—some moms need a different flange size as the weeks go by
- Try to relax and think of baby, look at pictures and pump at bedside if possible.
- Encourage mom to talk to baby’s nurse or Lactation nurse about her supply
Helpful things to say to mom

- Let mom know that this is not forever....this is a temporary moment in mom’s life.

- The short term-pain is worth a lifetime of gain for baby.

- Each time you pump, you can say to yourself, “I am pumping for my baby’s brain.”

- Help mom create short-term goals (even just for a month).

- Let mom know that the first 2 weeks are key to making enough, then things will get much easier.

- Providing enough milk for the baby’s NICU stay is a great goal!
Maternal Nutrition

• Mom should continue taking prenatal vitamins

• Making milk uses more calories than being pregnant!
  • Requires 500 extra calories/day (e.g., extra PB sandwich & glass of milk.)

• Drink plenty of liquids

• A little caffeine is fine (one coffee or caffeinated soda each day)

• A little alcohol is ok (½ a glass of wine or ½ a beer)
  • Alcohol can decrease milk supply; be careful if building milk production.

• Eat a varied healthy diet to ensure adequate protein

• Consider taking a DHA supplement (adds beneficial fats into breast milk)
Mom’s Nutrition and Health Tips

• Always carry **healthy snacks** in your bag (e.g., cheese, granola bar)

  • It is amazing how **exhausting** pumping can be and it is crucial to keep up your strength and stay nourished

• Eating foods high in **protein** is beneficial for you and your milk quality.

• Bring a filled **water bottle** with you each day and stay hydrated!

• Be sure to check the **NICU parent room** for snacks and drinks.

  • Utilize this room when you need a break or want to pump in privacy (although we always encourage bedside pumping).

  • **SPIN Mommas** should check that refrigerator is stocked and let NICU secretary know if more food/drinks are needed.

  • **Getting adequate sleep** is important, but obviously a challenge, help mom problem solve.
Keeping track of milk production

- By focusing on daily milk volume, you can be sure you maintain your best milk production

- Keeping track of the amount produced in the whole day vs. amount at each pump – focus on each DAY!

- An individual larger pump volume does not equal a greater daily milk output

- Celebrate goals and milestones (e.g., 1 month of pumping, a full bin, a full freezer)

More frequent pumping = more milk!!
Volume Goals

- Tracking 24 hour mother’s milk volume (MMV)

- How much do we want mom to produce each day?
  - Basic goal is 500 mls per day
  - Do not compare to mother next to you

- First 2 weeks, mom should pump 7 times a day (every 3 and once at night)

- Once you hit 500 mls and 2 weeks, mom can usually back off to pumping every 4 hours (and sometimes sleep all night)
Tracking Milk - Keep it simple

- For first days, use check marks to indicate whether pumping occurred (not amount) – this is less stressful for mom as initial volume is low.
- Once volume increases, mom can write in amount for each pumping.
- At this time, mom can start adding up 24 hour milk volume.

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Log Book Instructions:
Pumping soon after delivery stimulates your breasts to make milk. Simply check off the times you pump during those first days. Once your baby is ready, enjoy S2S time as much as you can; this contact helps your body make more milk. Below, write down any questions or concerns you want to discuss with us.

Mother’s goal is to pump at 6 times in the day and once at night for 15-20 minutes.
Tracking Milk: Key points for weeks 1 - 2

• Mom now starts to keep track of each pump volume

• Remind her to check off skin-to-skin too!

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*Mother’s goal is to pump at 6 times in the day and once at night for 15-20 minutes.*
Milk Volume – weeks 3+

• Mom can help by keeping track of milk volume every day
• Add up the daily total at the bottom of the column
• Write the milk volume number on baby’s blue bedside card under MMV (maternal milk volume)
Encourage Mom to keep her bin full so she never runs out!
Medications and Pumping

• Most prescribed meds can be taken while pumping milk for a preemie

• The pain medication given after delivery is safe (Vicodin, Percocet), as are acetaminophen (tylenol) and ibuprofen (motrin/advil)

• Cold medications can decrease milk supply, so be careful with antihistamines or Sudafed-type drugs

• Hormonal birth control methods (pills, IUD, Depoprovera shot) can decrease milk supply (especially if mom is dependent on pumping)

• Check with lactation consultant or physician to see if a new med is ok

• A mom should NEVER stop pumping or throw milk away until discussing with a member of the NICU team

  • Moms often think meds contaminate the milk, when they in fact, do not.

• Mom needs to beware of bad advice that they may receive even from doctors. They should double check recommendations to stop pumping with the baby’s doctor or NICU lactation nurse
Illness and Pumping

• If a mom is sick, it is very important to continue pumping; there may be antibodies in the milk that may protect the baby.

• If she is very sick she can stay home, but she should keep pumping. Very few illnesses require her to stop pumping!
Pumping at the bedside tips

• Find a comfortable chair

• Use a nice cover up (we have for moms)

• Ask for pillows

• Use a hands-free home-made bra with 2 holes cut out to hold pumps on each breast.

• Bedside pumping helps you make more milk

• It is a good opportunity to read to your baby/sing to your baby.

• Baby knows and needs your voice
MOMS Milk Tracking System

• MOMS milk tracking system is used in the NICU to log in and bar code breast milk

• System is critical – it keeps a mother’s milk linked to her baby so it is not accidentally given to the wrong baby

• System used by NICU nurses and some trained volunteers.

• Mom should know/monitor her bin to ensure it stays full.

• Ask Every Week! Do not run out!
How it Works

- Whenever milk is taken from the fridge or freezer, it is then scanned again against the baby's barcode.

- The nurse must also scan her badge prior to the milk being given to the baby.

- This system has been very successful in getting the right milk to the right baby and in preventing errors.

- Mom can help by carefully labeling and dating all her milk.
Supporting Mom

• Provide **encouragement** to mom, regardless of how much milk she is able to produce; help her to make realistic goals.

• **Try to answer mom’s questions.** If need be, don’t hesitate to ask the appropriate person to find the answer
  
  • Ask lactation nurse, occupational therapist, bedside nurse, SPIN member

• Volunteer mom can go to the **SPIN website** to review pumping information, watch our videos, or email Dr. Lisa Stellwagen (spinprogram.ucsd.edu) with any questions or issues.
What are mother’s goals?

• Mothers come into this experience with many different feeding intentions for their baby. Once faced with a premature birth they may be willing to change.

  • Mom may start with one intention and then get into it - we have seen this many times!

  • The rare mother who does not want to pump may be convinced by talking with a physician (call Dr Stellwagen or Dr Kim)-we haven’t been turned down yet.

• Options for pumping for a preemie:

  • Pump for 2 weeks (colostrum only)

  • Pump for NICU stay

  • Pump and learn to breastfeed
How to help a mom who makes a lot of milk/overproduces

- Women who make more than 1-2 liters of milk per day may have low calorie milk, and should be referred to lactation consultant.

- Storage issue – overproduction can lead to storage space issues.

- Donation advise- don’t donate what you might want later.

More milk does not necessarily equal better milk; quality is just as important as quantity.
But mom does it!

(big brother of baby on first slide)
Mom needs to take care of herself and her milk supply to best help her baby.