Breastfeeding During Pregnancy

Many mothers who are nursing an infant or toddler think they should stop breastfeeding if they find out they are pregnant. It is an individual choice to decide whether to keep breastfeeding during the pregnancy.
Some important considerations include:

- The age of the nursing child, and his physical and emotional needs.
- Health concerns related to pregnancy. These may be uterine bleeding or pain while breastfeeding, a history of preterm labor and delivery, or weight loss by the mother during pregnancy.
- Discomfort experienced by the mother, such as nipple soreness.

There is no documented danger to a mother or her unborn baby if she chooses to breastfeed during a healthy pregnancy. If she is well-nourished, she should have no difficulty providing for the unborn baby and her nursing older child. If you choose to continue breastfeeding, it is important that you:

- Eat enough calories to gain adequate weight.
- Eat nutritious foods.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Take prenatal vitamin supplements.

Your caregiver may advise you to stop breastfeeding if you are having some problems in your pregnancy, such as:

- Uterine pain or bleeding.
- A history of preterm labor and delivery.
- Problems gaining weight during pregnancy, or losing weight.

Your child may decide to stop breastfeeding on her own. Pregnancy changes the amount and flavor of your milk. If your nursing baby is younger than twelve months old, the normal decrease of your milk supply that happens during pregnancy could shortchange her nutritional needs. You may want to keep track of your baby's weight during this time and discuss with your baby's caregiver your decision to continue breastfeeding.

Some women choose to wean at this time due to:

- Nipple soreness, caused by pregnancy hormones.
- Being nauseous.
- Finding that their growing stomachs make breastfeeding uncomfortable.
- Getting tired easily.

It is important during this time to remain flexible and to avoid any rigid expectations of how breastfeeding will go, not only for yourself but also for your nursing child. Your needs and your nursing child's needs are likely to change as your pregnancy progresses. One option is to simply take it one day at a time.

Most of this information is courtesy of the La Leche League.

Document Released: 04/17/2006 Document Re-Released: 12/06/2010
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