



Lactation University Volunteer Support Program

Track 2: Postpartum Meetings

Theme: The older child/full-term breastfeeding

OBJECTIVES:

1. Attendees will be able to list 3 advantages for breastfeeding beyond a year
2. Attendees will be able to explain 3 ways to know if their baby is ready for solids
3. Attendees will be able to list several ways to wean a child from the breast

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION/DISCUSSION: What have you heard about weaning?

Education: Natural Weaning

What do you think is the average age for weaning?

In the United States, natural weaning (infant-led) takes place between 2-4 years of age. Planned weaning (mother-led) occurs when the breastfeeding parent decides to stop breastfeeding. Ideally, the decision to end breastfeeding should be determined by what is best for both Mom and Baby. Gentle weaning is better than abrupt weaning.

Education: Introducing Solids

The AAP updated their recommendation for breastfeeding duration. They now encourage breastfeeding for at least 2 years. Babies should be exclusively breastfed for 6 months and then continue receiving breastmilk along with complimentary foods.

Around 6 months, babies can receive table food. Babies should not eat honey, whole milk, or egg whites until after a year. Some people begin with purees and then progress to mashed and finally small pieces of food they pick up with their fingers. Some families choose to practice baby led feeding.

Education: Reaching your goal

There are a lot of reasons to continue breastfeeding beyond a year. After one year, the fat, protein, and energy content in breast milk increases significantly compared to breast milk under one year.

Fat and protein were the highest in human milk expressed after two years. Researchers suspect this has to do with the increasing energy needs in toddlers compared to infants.

Additional reasons to practice full-term breastfeeding:

- It provides nutrition for the baby
- It boosts the baby's immune system
- It lowers the risks of certain diseases
- It helps with brain development
- It soothes your baby and helps with bonding
- It can be convenient

If you plan to continue breastfeeding, there are some ways to ensure that your baby will feed at the breast regularly.

- Continue to enjoy 4 or more breastfeeding sessions daily
- Make feeding time special and quiet
- Honor a routine and eliminate distractions
- Increase cuddling and soothing your toddler
- Offer the breast often in various positions

Education: When and How to Wean

When you do decide to wean, these suggestions may be helpful

- Do not wean during a big life event
- Take it slow so you do not become engorged
- Offer breastmilk from a cup or bottle
- Don't offer the breast, but if the child asks, don't refuse
- Cut out the middle of the day sessions first
- Change your routines that are usually associated with breastfeeding (nap time, bedtime, etc.)
- Ask your partner to begin a new routine at times you would typically nurse
- Practice other comfort techniques (cuddling, snuggling, signing, massage, reading)

Suggested Teaching Techniques: Discussion

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Weaning <https://lila.org/breastfeeding-info/weaning-how-to/> Introducing solids: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/babies/breastfeeding-bottle-feeding-solids/solids-drinks/introducing-solids>

<https://www.lancastergeneralhealth.org/health-hub-home/motherhood/the-first-year/how-to-know-when-your-baby-is-ready-for-solids>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/weaning-and-feeding/babys-first-solid-foods/>

https://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/healthybaby/hb_solidfoods.pdf

Baby-led weaning <https://www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/feeding/introducing-solids/baby-led-weaning-pros-and-cons#:~:text=Baby%2Dled%20weaning%20is%20all,they%20pick%20up%20and%20eat.>

Prevent choking <https://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/wic/nutrition-materials/documents/food-for-babys-first-year-eng.pdf>