

Module 1D– Care of me

What I learn: Breastfeeding makes me feel good

Myths: True or False?

Anyone who smokes cigarettes should not breastfeed.

False: The medical recommendation (from doctors and scientific evidence) is that women should be encouraged to breastfeed, including those who smoke cigarettes. You or your partner may disagree, but please understand that the benefits of breastfeeding are so good that they outweigh the risk of the tiny amounts of nicotine or cotine in breastmilk of smokers. Babies of mothers who smoke are more likely to get respiratory (breathing) infections, and also have a higher risk of SIDS. Babies of mothers who breastfeed are protected against respiratory infections, and also have a lower risk of SIDS. So mothers who have not yet been able to quit smoking **SHOULD DEFINITELY BREASTFEED** because it helps the baby. It is always a good idea for your own health to quit smoking- see your doctor for help and ask your partner and family for positive support.

You have to eat healthy when you are breastfeeding or your milk will not be good for the baby.

False: It is always good to eat healthy, but your milk will be good no matter what you eat (chips, orange pop, don't tell me what else). You will feel better and have more energy if you eat well (protein, low-fat, lots of fruits and vegetables).

You should get something to drink every time you breastfeed.

True: Really, you should drink whenever you are thirsty. Water is the best thing to drink.

You should wash your breasts and nipples with soap and water, or wipe off with rubbing alcohol, after each breastfeeding so they are clean.

False: The baby's mouth on the nipple and areola does not make the nipple or breast dirty. You don't need soap on your breasts because it will dry out the skin. Rubbing alcohol should not get anywhere near your breasts! Express a little breast milk after each feeding onto the nipple area and let it air dry- breast milk has immune and healing ingredients that will help heal and cleanse your skin. A regular shower once a day with just water on the breast is fine.

It is OK to have up to 2-3 cups of coffee or caffeinated drinks each day and breastfeed.

True. Check it out on www.mypyramid.gov! “Drinking a moderate amount (up to 2 to 3 cups a day) of coffee or other caffeinated beverages does not affect your baby.” If you drink a cup of coffee and breastfeed shortly after you might notice the baby is not ready to go to sleep- so have your caffeine earlier in the day.

If your nipples are hurting you should get help right away because breastfeeding should be comfortable.

True: All pain needs to be evaluated or checked out with a health caregiver- either a doctor or nurse or lactation consultant. You probably need help with latch and position, and this is easy to fix with good help.

If you breastfeed you can lose your pregnancy weight quickly.

True: We know you will burn up an extra 400-500 calories every day when you breastfeed, so you really can lose weight quickly! Plus with the uterus shrinking due to the breast milk let down hormone oxytocin many women feel their tummy gets flat very soon.

Breastfeeding makes your breasts sag and look less perky, and it might mess up your nipples.

False: The hormones of pregnancy make your breasts get larger, and then the breasts go down (shrink) after the pregnancy hormones are done. That is why women's breasts are different after they have a baby. If you breastfeed your breasts will stay larger while you are breastfeeding (the milk hormones) and then they will go down after the baby weans. So if you want full time perky breasts, the thing is say "no" to pregnancy, not to breastfeeding! When the baby is breastfeeding your nipple should be way in the back of the baby's mouth (good latch) so your nipples feel good- get help within 24 hours if there is nipple pain, but for your own comfort, not because the nipple will get messed up.

It's OK to use all my usual skin lotions and perfumes when I am breastfeeding.

True: Your baby loves how you smell because it's you! What you do for yourself everyday does not need to change. Just don't put your lotion or perfume right on the breast or nipple- only lanolin or expressed breast milk can go there- but everywhere else is fine.

It's nasty to have the baby suck on your breasts.

False: That is not true. The baby drinking milk from your breasts is completely natural. That is what breasts are for. The milk "let down" hormone, oxytocin, gives you a deeply calm, relaxed feeling AND it helps you to want to hold and bond to your baby – none of that is nasty at all. Your breasts might release milk during sex because of the same hormone (oxytocin), and you might have a mild sexual feeling while breastfeeding, which it is OK to enjoy.

You might have soreness or pain in the first two weeks of breastfeeding.

True. Your nipples and breasts are not used to the baby feeding. But you can be in control of this: only accept deep comfortable latch- don't let the baby suck on the nipple only. Use different positions to feed and start on the other side each time. Get help if you need to. You will feel tugging and pulling, but pain IS NOT part of breastfeeding.