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RESEARCH ARTICLE

AN OVERVIEW ON EFFECTIVE FEEDING POSITIONS, BREAST FEEDING POLICIES AND FACILITIES PROVIDED IN MATERNITY AND NEW-BORN CARE CENTRES

Dr. Saumya P. Jose[1] and Dr. Tobin Joseph[2]

1. Associate Professor, Vidhyarathna College of Nursing, Udupi, Karnataka.
2. Professor, Indira College of Nursing, Mangalore, Karnataka.

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Abstract

Breastfeeding is very essential for the child survival, nutrition, development and maternal health. It is essential to know about the effective breast feeding positions, the available policies an facilities provided by the government and various other non governmental organizations for delivering an defective care to both mother and newborn. This particular study reviews the effective feeding positions, breast feeding policies and facilities provided in maternity and new-born care centres.

Introduction:-

Many studies have been reported the effect of breastfeeding in decreasing child infections and dental malocclusion and increasing intelligence. Mothers who breastfeed are at decreased risk of breast cancer.Breast milk contains all the nutrients that an infant requires in the first 6 months of life, including fat, carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, minerals and water. The breast milk will get digested easily and it can be efficiently used. Breast milk also consists of bioactive factors that supplement the infant's immature immune system, it protects from various infections, and other factors that help digestion and absorption of nutrients. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life, followed by continued breastfeeding with appropriate complementary foods for up to 2 years .Benefits for the mother Breastfeeding soon after birth aids in uterine involution thus decreases probabilities of post partum hemorrhage. It provides 98% protection against pregnancy if the baby is completely breastfed during the first four months of life .Breastfeeding is more convenient and time saving. It reduces the risk of breast and ovarian cancer. It improves the body appearance of the mother by consuming extra fat laid down during third trimester of pregnancy.Educating the mother regarding the various breast feeding position will help to feed the baby appropriately. Most of the women are not aware of the effective feeding positions especially during the first delivery period. Nurses, midwifes and other health care professional plays a crucial role in delivering the knowledge regarding the effective feeding positions. Inappropriate positioning during the feeding may cause adverse effects on the baby such as choking, vomiting etc. This particular overview includes the effective breast feeding positions, guidelines and policies concerned to breast feeding in various maternity services and health centers.

Effective feeding positions for mother and baby

Position of the mother

The mother can be in a comfortable and relaxed position either sitting, lying down or standing. Her back, shoulder or neck should not get strain as she may have to be in this position for a longer period. If she is sitting, her back needs to be supported, and she should be able to hold the baby at her breast without slanting forward.

Corresponding Author:- Dr. Tobin Joseph
Address:- Professor, Indira College of Nursing, Mangalore, Karnataka.

Position of the baby

The baby can breastfeed in numerous diverse positions in relation to the mother. The baby can be positioned across her chest and abdomen, under her arm, or alongside her body. The baby's body should be straight, not bent or twisted. The baby's head can be slightly extended at the neck, which helps his or her chin to be close in to the breast. Make sure that airway is maintained properly. Furthermore, baby should be supported so that the head, neck and back are in the same plane. The whole body should face the mother. The baby will have relaxed access to the breast if the baby's abdomen touches the mother's abdomen. Let gravity support the infant, there is no need to apply pressure along the infant's back or neck to keep the infant in place.

Latching

After proper positioning the baby's cheek is touched (rooting reflex), the baby's head will turn towards the side breast and will open the mouth, so that the nipple and most of the areola is within the baby's mouth. Now when the nipple is inserted into the baby's mouth, baby will starts sucks(sucking reflex) and takes milk from the breast. As the baby is well positioned, the mother will feel no pain while feeding.The nipples generally point somewhat downwards, so the baby should not be flat against the mother's chest or abdomen, but curved slightly on his or her back able to see the mother's face. The baby's body should be close to the mother which permits the baby to be close to the breast, and to take a large mouthful. She should not hold the baby's bottom, as this can pull him or her too far out to the side, and make it hard for the baby to get his or her chin and tongue beneath the areola.

Policy for centres which provides maternity services and care of newborn

1. There should be a written breastfeeding policy and that should be informed to all the healthcare staffs in the centre.
2. Training should be provided for all the staff regarding the care of mother and newborn.
3. It is very important to educate the pregnant women about benefits of breast feeding, feeding position, care of newborn.
4. Inform all the mothers about the importance of exclusive breast feeding for 6 months unless medically indicated.
5. Breast feeding should be always done on demands and encourage it.
6. Educate the mother regarding the various complications seen in post-partum period and also inform them self-management strategies for such symptoms.

How to express breast milk by hand?

1. The mother should have a clean, dry, wide-necked container for the expressed breast milk.
2. Her hand should be washed properly.
3. Once this initial steps are done she can hold the container under her nipple and areola. She has to put her thumb on top of her breast and her first finger on the underneath of her breast so that they are opposite each other about 4 cms from the tip of the nipple.
4. After this she has to compress and release her breast between her finger and thumb a few times. If milk does not appear, re-position her thumb and finger a little nearer or further away from the nipple and compress and release a number of times as before.
5. The entire procedure should not hurt or provokes pain, if it hurts, the technique is wrong.
6. At the first time milk maynot come, it is necessary to motivate her and continue the same procedure. After repeating the compression for a few times, milk starts to drip out. It may flow in streams if the oxytocin reflex is active.
7. Express each breast until the milk drips slowly.
8. Repeat expressing from each breast 5 to 6 times.
9. Stop expressing when milk drips slowly from the start of compression, and does not flow.
10. Avoid rubbing or sliding her fingers along the skin .
11. Avoid squeezing or pinching the nipple itself.

Every facility providing maternity services and care for newborn infants should

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff.
2. all the heakth care staffs should be trained the necessary skills required for providing the services.
3. all the pregnant women should be informed in advance regarding the benefits and importance of providing breast feeding
4. the health care provide should initiate breastfeeding within half-hour of normal delivery.

5. Show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation even if they should be separated from their infants. Most of the time especially during the first pregnancy mother wont be knowing the effective breast feeding positions or holding techniques. That should taught in advance.
6. Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated.
7. Practice rooming-in. It allows mothers and infants to remain together for 24 hours a day.
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand. This is very important and should be informed the mother and also make sure that mother is feeding on demands.
9. Give no artificial teats or pacifiers (also called dummies or soothers) to breastfeeding infants.
10. Substitute the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or clinic.

Conclusion:-

Even though the pregnancy and breast feeding are normal physiological process it is very essential to teach the women the importance of breast feeding, the techniques, the policies of maternity services so that most of the post partum complications can be minimized. Motivation and support to the mother are also most important corner stones for successful breastfeeding. Three prerequisite for successful Breastfeeding are a willing and motivated mother, an active and sucking newborn, a motivator who can bring mother and newborn together (health professional or relative).

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