



Staff Supporting Breastfeeding

Things to Prepare for...

Some breastfeeding moms will insist on having backup formula during the first month. We need to focus on helping these moms succeed with breastfeeding by:

- Educating prenatally
- Congratulating and praising mom for breastfeeding!
- Asking, “What is your plan for breastfeeding?”
- Asking, “Why do you want supplemental formula?”



For instance, the breastfeeding mother of an infant comes into the clinic during the baby’s first month. She is already supplementing her baby with formula after each feeding. What is an appropriate course of action?

There are two possible scenarios:

1. For a *non-medical reason*, here is a suggested dialogue that might follow:

- Tell her “It is great that you are breastfeeding, it’s what your baby needs to grow up healthy! I am interested in why you are also giving formula. Will you please tell me about that?”
- The mother may respond with the following: not enough breastmilk, “just in case,” soreness when feeding, so someone else can feed, don’t want to feed in public, too many appointments, too busy with other children, someone else encouraged mother to give formula, just to make sure baby gets what s/he needs, baby had formula in the hospital, etc.
- Tell her “WIC would like to help you be successful with breastfeeding.” Address her issues by asking her open ended questions. For examples, ask “What makes you think you don’t have enough milk?” or, “How long are you hoping to breastfeed your baby?” Affirm and then educate but work together to find solutions that meet her needs.
- Not having enough breastmilk is the number one concern reported. Discuss with her that giving only breastmilk in the first critical weeks is best for her baby and helps successfully establish her milk supply. Having formula around discourages breastfeeding and may reduce her confidence. Offer solutions based on the issue, e.g., feed more often, use a pump, refer to support group, or let mom come into the clinic to weigh baby as desired.

2. For a *medical reason*, here is a suggested dialogue that might follow:

- Tell her “It is great that you are breastfeeding, it’s what your baby needs to grow up healthy! I am interested in why you are providing formula as well. Will you please tell me about that?”
- The mother may say that any of these illnesses were diagnosed in the hospital, and formula was started: low blood sugar, jaundice, prematurity, very low birth weight infant, etc.
- Ask her, “How long did the doctor say the baby needs formula?” and “How long are you hoping to breastfeed your baby?”
- Tell her “WIC would like to help you be successful with breastfeeding. I’d like to have you talk to our clinic’s lactation educator. She may offer solutions based on your current situation, and can even work with your doctor to see if your baby still needs formula. She can also provide a hospital grade electric breast pump. WIC is supportive of breastfeeding and we would like you to get the full food package benefits with the new food packages, for both you and baby.

What other situations can you think of?