Antenatal education

By the time you are 32 weeks pregnant you should have had antenatal education on breastfeeding. Research has shown that women who have a good understanding of the importance of breastfeeding and associated topics are more likely to have a successful breastfeeding outcome.

‘To overcome obstacles issues surrounding perceived barriers, such as father's attitude, quantity of milk, and time constraints, need to be discussed with each parent. To achieve the goal of 75% of breastfeeding mothers, extensive education regarding the benefits must be provided for both parents and optimally the grandmother by physicians, nurses, and the media before pregnancy or within the first trimester.’¹

You should ensure the following topics are discussed with you during your pregnancy:

- the Breastfeeding Policy of the maternity unit where you intend to birth and/or stay postnatally.
- the importance of breastfeeding for you and your baby
- the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months
- the effect of drugs, used in labour, on both your baby and the initiation of breastfeeding
- the importance of early skin-to-skin contact for you, your baby and for breastfeeding
- early breastfeeding management
- rooming-in which should include safe and unsafe sleeping practices
- cue-based, or baby-led, feeding
- the importance of frequent feeding to establish and maintain your breastmilk
- positioning and latching advice
- the risks associated with giving formula or other breastmilk substitutes before 6 months of age
- that breastfeeding continues to be important after 6 months when other foods may be introduced
- the implications of using pacifiers, teats and bottles on the establishment of breastfeeding
- breastfeeding support services in your community

Ask you Lead Maternity Carer about these topics (above) and seek out the antenatal education classes in your area.

We also recommend that you contact the local La Leche League and attend a meeting, or two, prior to the birth of your baby.

Contact with your local Plunket group, in the later weeks of your pregnancy, can also mean that you meet another group of women for support after the birth of your baby.

Skin-to-skin contact and Rooming-in pamphlets are available from the NZBA website/resources.

Suggested readings/links include:

- Change for Our Children: www.changeforourchildren.co.nz
- La Leche League New Zealand: www.lalecheleague.org.nz

Research:

1. Major factors influencing breastfeeding rates: Mother’s perception of father’s attitude and milk supply. 