

# **Module 10 – Talking With Mothers About Breastfeeding...During Months 7 to 12**

## **Overview**

This tenth module focuses on supporting the breastfeeding mother during the second six months of an infant's life. It will touch on growth patterns of a breastfed baby during this second half of the first year and strategies for breastfeeding through teething, dealing with biting, and adding solids to the baby's diet. This module will also offer information for helping mothers who are considering weaning.

## **Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of this module, peer counselors will be able to:

- List two ways to assist mothers through the weaning process.
- Name two common issues that arise when nursing an older baby.

**Time Allowed:** 1 hour

## **Background Information**

A mother is more confident about her breastfeeding during the second half of her baby's first year. A mother does, however, receive a great deal of social pressure from well-meaning friends and family members. Pressure comes in the form of advice about adding solid foods, how long to breastfeed, and when to wean. The WIC Program provides nutrition education to mothers throughout the first year as well as certification of breastfeeding mothers at the first birthdays of their babies.

## **Checklist**

- AV Equipment
  - PowerPoint or overhead projector
- Teaching Tools
  - Flip chart and markers
- Handouts
  - Handout #10A – Practice Counseling Scenario
  - Handout #10B – Opening the Conversation with Mothers During Months 7 to 12
- Resources
  - “Feeding the Breastfed Baby,” Chapter 3 in USDA Food and Nutrition Service's *Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Programs*. Available online at: [www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/feeding\\_infants.html](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/feeding_infants.html)
  - State or local agency WIC Program publications used for nutrition education contacts.
  - *How Weaning Happens*, by Diane Bengson. Available from [www.lalecheleague.org](http://www.lalecheleague.org)

### **Additional Learning Opportunities**

- Provide opportunities for peer counselors to shadow a WIC nutritionist who is counseling a mother during a nutrition education contact. Use the Shadowing Breastfeeding Experts: Peer Counselor Log provided in the “Continuing Education of Peer Counselors” section as a guide.
- Invite a WIC nutritionist to discuss signs of food allergies and to talk about the introduction of the cup with peer counselors. This crossover of education builds consistency within WIC Program information sources.
- Read “Weaning,” “Do I need to stop breastfeeding when the baby’s teeth come in?” and “What are nursing strikes?” in Amy Spangler’s *Breastfeeding: A Parent’s Guide*.
- Read Part 5, “As Your Baby Grows” in La Leche League’s *Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*.
- Nursing strikes can be explored more thoroughly in staff meetings and on-going training opportunities.

## Module 10 – Trainer Notes

**Slide #1**                    **Module 10: Talking With Mothers About Breastfeeding...  
During Months 7 to 12**  
During this session, we will focus on the second six months of a baby's first year of life. We will look at beginning solid foods, teething, biting, and weaning.

**Slide #2**                    **Learning Objectives**  
Upon completion of this module, peer counselors will be able to do the following:

- List two ways to assist mothers through the weaning process.
- Name two common issues that arise when nursing an older baby.

**Slide #3**                    **Growth During the Second Six Months**  
After doubling birth weight in the first six months, weight gain begins to slow in months 7 through 12.

[Key Talking Points]

- By his or her first birthday, a breastfed baby will be between 2.5 to 3 times his or her birth weight.
- If a mother is concerned about her baby's growth rate, the counselor should yield to the WIC nutritionist and to a WIC designated breastfeeding expert.
- Encourage mothers to keep their WIC appointments.

**Slide #4**                    **Curious Baby**  
During this period of increased activity and curiosity, nursing babies can be easily distracted and pull at the breasts as they try to examine sights and sounds that are going on around them.

[Key Talking Points]

- Mothers may experience sore nipples much like they did in the early days of nursing.
- Peer counselors may need to remind mothers about sore nipple relief measures.
- Short nursing sessions for baby's comfort are common during this period.
- Reassure mothers that this is normal for babies as they begin to become more independent.

## Slide #5

### **On Strike**

Occasionally a baby will suddenly refuse to breastfeed for a period of time lasting from several feedings to several days. This is called a “nursing strike” and can often cause the mother great anxiety and lead her to believe her baby is rejecting her. Without reassurance from the peer counselor that this is normal, she may wean prematurely.

#### [Key Talking Points]

- Many mothers never figure out what caused the nursing strike.
- Most babies do return to the breasts.
- Some suggestions for a mother to help end the nursing strike include:
  - Minimize distractions. Dim the lights and decrease the noise in the room.
  - Try other positions to nurse the baby.
  - Continue to put the baby to breast, especially when he or she shows early signs of hunger or is nearly asleep.
  - Give expressed milk in a cup, spoon, or dropper until breastfeeding resumes.
- Yield to the WIC designated breastfeeding expert when a nursing strike continues beyond 24 hours.

## Slide #6

### **Teething**

Long before a baby’s teeth appear, the mother is concerned about those teeth and how they impact breastfeeding. Many women plan to wean when baby’s teeth come in.

#### [Key Talking Points]

- Babies get fussy when they are teething. Some even run fevers. For many breastfed babies, this is the first fever they will experience.
- As teeth emerge, the baby will learn how to nurse without “biting.”
- Encourage the mother to break suction and remove the baby from the breast when the baby bears down or chews while nursing.
- The mother should do this each time “biting” happens.
- Babies learn quickly not to bite when they have their feeding interrupted.

**Slide #7****Ready for Solids**

Solids are appropriate for babies in the second six months. Breastfed babies tend to take solids well. Since birth, they have gotten used to a wide variety of food tastes received through breast milk. Mothers should be advised to talk to the WIC nutritionist about adding solid foods.

## [Instructional Guidance]

- Distribute, read, and discuss the nutrition education materials that WIC provides to mothers of babies 6 to 12 months of age.
- Invite a WIC nutritionist to teach peer counselors what the mothers learn during this nutrition education contact about feeding babies of this age.

## [Key Talking Points]

- Breastfeed first and then offer solids to insure adequate milk intake.
- Pick a calm time of day to introduce new foods.
- Remind the mother that she will see a change in the baby's bowel movements as different solids are introduced. This includes color and consistency changes.

**Slide #8****Signs of Allergic Reactions**

Some babies will have allergic reactions to some of the new foods they are given. While peer counselors should not treat food allergies, they should know some signs of allergic reaction. Peer counselors should refer mothers whose babies appear to be having allergic reactions to new foods to the WIC designated breastfeeding expert or to their health professionals.

## [Key Talking Points]

- Some signs of allergic reaction that mothers may observe include:
  - Diaper rash
  - Hives on the baby's body
  - Vomiting, diarrhea
  - Wheezing, congestion
  - Red, watery eyes
- Constipation can be a sign that the baby's system is overwhelmed with new foods.
- Decreasing the amount of solids and increasing breastfeeding should relieve constipation.
- Peer counselors should yield to the baby's physician or healthcare provider when the mother reports signs of allergic reaction.

- Questions concerning the baby’s diet should always be referred to the WIC nutritionist who can offer appropriate recommendations.

**Slide #9**

**Introducing a Cup**

Around six months of age is a good time to introduce a cup to a baby. Appropriate liquids from the cup include breast milk, water, and small amounts of WIC approved juice.

[Instructional Guidance]

- Ask a WIC nutritionist to teach the peer counselors what mothers learn about cup feeding in their local WIC Program’s nutrition education contacts.

**Slide #10**

**How Does Weaning Happen?**

Weaning begins when foods or liquids other than breast milk are introduced to the baby. Foods and juice “displace” breast milk in the baby’s diet.

[Key Talking Points]

- WIC encourages mothers to breastfeed through the first year of life. Most babies will continue to nurse that whole first year and beyond.
- Mothers feel tremendous pressure to wean before that first birthday.
- Many people express discomfort when observing an older baby at the breast.
- Peer counselors should explore the mother’s feelings about weaning carefully before offering education.

**Slide #11**

**Reasons Not to Wean**

Mothers may be told to wean for many reasons. Some of those reasons will not be valid.

[Key Talking Points]

- Reasons a mother may be told to wean include:
  - Teething
  - Better sleep for baby
  - Going back to work or school
  - Pregnancy
  - Illness
  - Medication
  - Mastitis
- In most of these cases, breastfeeding can continue.
- Help the mother assess the risks of weaning carefully.

[Instructional Guidance]

- Explore possible responses to well-meaning friends and family members that peer counselors can share with mothers. Post suggestions from the group on the flip chart. Possible responses to friends and family members include:
  - My baby has grown perfectly on my breast milk. I'm not ready to quit yet.
  - Our baby has been so healthy. He or she still gets protection from illness from my breast milk.
  - Breastfeeding is so much easier for me.
  - My doctor recommends breast milk until the first birthday.
  - The WIC Program recommends breastfeeding to at least the first birthday.

**Slide #12**

**Gradual Weaning**

If a mother chooses to wean, encourage her to wean over a period of weeks instead of abruptly. She will be much more comfortable physically with gradual weaning.

[Key Talking Points]

- Discontinue the feeding that baby is least interested in first.
- After three or four days, drop another feeding.
- This gradual weaning gives mother's body a chance to adjust to the decreased demand for milk. Her body will adjust the milk supply.
- Continue to drop feedings until the weaning is completed.
- If the baby is less than a year old, mother needs to contact her WIC Program for infant formula.
- Older babies, over one year of age, respond well to a policy of "don't ask and don't refuse" feedings.
  - Don't offer the breast, but don't refuse if they ask to nurse.
  - Older babies can:
    - Be distracted with activity.
    - Postpone feedings.
    - Have shortened length of feedings.
    - Have someone other than mother offer feedings.

**Slide #13**

**Weaning Quickly**

Sometimes a mother needs to wean quickly, as in the case of a woman starting chemotherapy treatment.

[Key Talking Points]

- A mother will need to know comfort measures for herself and her baby.
- For the mother:

- She can hand express milk or use a breast pump to remove just enough milk to be comfortable but not to empty the breast.
- She should be careful to not accidentally increase milk supply by over expressing.
- She can apply chilled cabbage leaves or cold packs to her breasts after pumping.
- She should wear a firm but non-binding bra.
- For the baby:
  - Offer increased cuddle time.
  - Another adult may need to offer milk to the baby for awhile as the baby adjusts to the bottle and formula.
- Yield to the WIC designated breastfeeding expert for additional information for this mother.
- Peer counselors should continue to offer support through this uncomfortable time.

**Slide #14**  
[Activity]

**Practicing 3-Step Counseling Skills**

*Learning Objective:* To help peer counselors practice using 3-Step skills in counseling mothers of babies 7 to 12 months old.

*Time:* 10 minutes

*Handout:* #10A – Practice Counseling Scenario

*Directions:*

- Divide peer counselors into pairs.
- Ask participants to work together to complete the handouts.
- Ask the participants to share their work.
- Discuss alternative options as they arise.
- When activity is completed, sign and date the Peer Counselor Skills Checklist Card, in the Module 10 – Practice Counseling Scenario section.

[Instructional Guidance]

- Affirm peer counselors as they share their ideas.
- These educational points need to be addressed in counseling:
  - Social support is waning for Sarah.
  - Address Grandmother’s need to be more involved with the baby.
  - Review growth pattern of breastfed infants.
  - Refer to WIC nutritionist for nutrition education and review of the growth chart.

## Slide #15

### When to Contact Mothers

Peer counselors need to continue to contact the mother into the second six months of the baby's life.

- Mothers should be contacted at least once per month.
- Peer counselors need to monitor any issues that arise and remind mothers to keep appointments for nutrition education at WIC.
- If the mother is experiencing a problem, support her as needed until that problem resolves. Then go back to once a month contacts.

## Slide #16 [Activity]

### Opening the Conversation With Mothers

*Learning Objective:* To help peer counselors identify common open-ended questions to ask a mother during months 7 to 12.

*Time:* 15 minutes

*Handout:* #10B – Opening the Conversation with Mothers During Months 7 to 12

*Directions:*

- Ask the group to identify open-ended questions that can be used to begin a dialogue with a breastfeeding mother in the second six months of the baby's first year.
- Peer counselors should write the open-ended questions on their handouts for later reference.
- Affirm peer counselors as they share questions they develop.
- After peer counselors identify questions, or if they are having trouble identifying opening questions, mention the sample questions on the slide. These questions are also found on the back of their handouts.
- Praise peer counselors for any questions they create that are similar to those on the slide or handout.
- Let peer counselors know they can use their handouts as a reference tool when counseling new mothers.
- Examples of open-ended questions they might use:
  - How is your baby growing?
  - How has breastfeeding changed since the early months?
  - What kinds of things do people say to you now about breastfeeding? How does that make you feel?
  - What is your plan for starting solids?
  - How has teething affected your breastfeeding?
  - Who are your support people for breastfeeding now?

**Slide #17**

**Nursing Through the Second Six Months**

Helping the mother through the second six months offers peer counselors many opportunities to look for ways to support breastfeeding as the baby grows.

[Key Talking Points]

- You now have all the tools you need to help mothers through this first year and develop a positive breastfeeding relationship with their babies. Those tools include:
  - Training
  - Experience
  - Books you have read
  - Videos you have seen
  - The breastfeeding experts from WIC
  - An open mind
  - The desire to help others

**Slide #18**

**Final Thought**

*“My daughter is 8 months old, 16 lbs, and still breastfeeding. She has hit every single milestone early. The doctors cannot believe how well she’s done. She is never sick and she greets everyone with a smile and a giggle. I have no doubt in my mind that WIC got us where we are today.”*

WIC Mother