

5.24 Breastfeeding Contraindications

POLICY:

The Local Agency will include basic information on the contraindications to breastfeeding as part of the traditional breastfeeding promotion and education process. This will include information relating to HIV and recommendation for all pregnant women.

BACKGROUND:

Breast milk is considered the optimum food for infants under most circumstances, but breastfeeding is not recommended for all mothers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended that HIV-infected women refrain from breastfeeding since the virus can be transmitted through breast milk. Although rare, other conditions that may contraindicate breastfeeding include: use of certain prescription drugs and street drugs; and excessive exposure to some environmental contaminants.

In the category of medications and drugs, the presence of antimetabolites, therapeutic doses of radiopharmaceuticals (radiation), and street drugs of abuse contraindicate breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is also contraindicated in rare instances of environmental contamination such as excessive exposure to herbicides and pesticides from waste disposal sites and extreme home exposure to lead-based paint.

PROCEDURE:

A. Local Agency Breastfeeding Education

1. Continue to promote breastfeeding as the optimum way to feed infants and offer breastfeeding information at every possible opportunity.
2. Recommend that each pregnant woman know their HIV status.
3. Advise against breastfeeding if the participant is HIV-positive.
 - a. Inform them that early treatment is available to help prevent the onset of AIDS.
 - b. Do not schedule a participant who is known to be HIV-positive for a prenatal breastfeeding class.
4. Advise against breastfeeding if the participant is a chronic street drug or alcohol user, has recently had radiation therapy (in the last 6 months), or is exposed to extremely high amounts of environmental toxins. Questions relating to these issues should be referred to the participant's health care provider.
5. Advise that certain prescription medications may temporarily contraindicate breastfeeding.
 1. Encourage the client to question whether alternate medications can be prescribed which accommodate breastfeeding.

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2. Encourage the client to ask the physician if dosage timing or prescription strength might be adjusted to accommodate uninterrupted breastfeeding.

6. Advise that while mother is taking a medication that contraindicates breastfeeding, she can:
 - < use a breast pump to maintain milk supply;
 - < dispose of the expressed milk;
 - < use a bottle to feed previously expressed breast milk or commercial formula; and
 - < return to breastfeeding after the medication period is completed.

REFERENCES:

1. “U.S. Public Health Service Recommendations for Human Immunodeficiency Virus Counseling and Voluntary Testing for Pregnant Women”, CDC, 1995
2. SFP 98-117, Draft WIC Policy Memorandum: Contraindications to Breastfeeding