



Breastfeeding older Children

Dr. Tarané Probst

Herrschingerstrasse 13e
D-82266 Inning, Germany.
Tel.: + 49-172 51 99 227
Email: tarane.probst@web.de

Biography

Tarané Probst, MD, MPH, IBCLC, president of VELB, Inning, Germany, OB/ GYN and board certified nutrition specialist. Currently working as medical advisor for women's health in a pharmaceutical company. Areas of indication: Fertility, contraception and hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

Abstract

Looking at the history of baby food, one sees that attitudes and evaluation towards the issue of "breastfeeding" have changed manifold. In the beginning it was self-evident to breastfeed, because there was no reliable alternative. Time and again one can find evidence that some babies have been fed by animal milk or other nutrition a few weeks after birth. But back then the advantages of breastfeeding was also known.

In saga's (e.g., the formation of the milky way) or old paintings (Madonna Lactans) and in other sources, one will find indicators that highlight specific characteristics of breastfeeding: breast milk is said to hold healing power and infuse wisdom (Philosophia Sapientia).

It was well-known in the 19th century that children had a higher mortality and morbidity if they were not breastfed. There were even special provisions of law that endorsed breastfeeding for infants. One hundred years ago, a child that had only been breastfed for a year was considered as being breastfed for a short time. Compared to then many children living today are breastfed an ultra-short time.

Breastfeeding gives both infants and mothers invaluable advantages. Many different studies show that a long breastfeeding period can protect both mother and child from different kind of illnesses. Generally breastfeeding facilitates everyday life. It's possible almost anytime and anywhere. Breast milk is available free of charge and always at the right temperature. There is no risk of protein denaturation from heating milk or of wrong dosing. Further, one needs not spend time washing or disinfecting teats or bottles and buying baby food. All of this adds up to more time, independence and convenience in many situations in daily life, e.g., spare time activities, travel, and sleep during nighttime. Additionally, breastfeeding saves money and preserves the environment.

There are only a few contraindications against breastfeeding or temporary restriction for it. In most cases continuing breastfeeding is considerably less stressful for mothers and their children than switching from breastfeeding to formula food. A mother who gets sick frequently needs additional support for herself during the period of illness. And there is only one single absolute pediatric contraindication to breast-feeding: the congenital galactosemia (disorder of metabolism). But how long should mothers feed their babies with their breasts?