

Observing Breastfeeding In Newborn Babies

Why and How



Ministry of Women & Child Development
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What do people consider as good breastfeeding practices in newborn babies?



Display the card and ask participants to read each point, one by one.
Ask them to answer the questions.



Explain that these questions are about newborn babies, not older children.

Explain that they do not have to answer about their own perceptions, but that they should think and tell how village folk assess breastfeeding.

What do people think about these issues? 'Ask';

- How often should a newborn baby feed?
- How much time should a baby take to empty out one breast?
- How strongly should a baby suckle?
- Should babies be fed on both breasts during each feed?



Allow discussions for a few minutes. Make a note of the responses.



5 Minute

What do people consider as good breastfeeding practices in newborn babies?



- How often should the baby be fed?
- What should be the frequency of breastfeeding?
- How vigorously the baby should breastfeed?
- Should baby be fed from one breast or both breasts during each feed?





How to observe breastfeeding?



Make arrangements in advance to make it possible for participants to observe breastfeeding during the meeting.

Invite at least two mothers with babies under two months old to the meeting. They should be invited to come and spend at least two hours at the meeting, and should be told that the participants at the meeting will observe them breastfeeding their babies. If possible, one of the babies should be a premature baby or with a birth weight of less than 2 kg, and one of them should be a healthy baby who was born with a birth weight of around 3 kg or more.

Begin by observing the baby who is healthy. The mother should sit comfortably facing the participants, and requested to breastfeed her baby. If the baby is asleep and does not easily wake up, the observation can be postponed to the end of the meeting. If there are more mothers and babies, it will be possible for participants to observe more examples of breastfeeding.

Please remember:

Do not try to counsel the mother, simply observe.

Using the list on the right, guide the participants to observe each point carefully.

1. **Is the mother sitting or lying comfortably?** (if the mother is not comfortable, she will not be able to allow the baby to suckle for a long time; a healthy baby usually feeds for at least 10 minutes at a time).
2. **Is the baby well supported for feeding?** (if the baby is well supported, she can feed continuously for a long time without getting tired)
3. **Is the baby's head bent a little backwards?** (if the head is bent forward, it is difficult for the baby to breathe and suckle)
4. **Is the major part of areola (black area around the nipple) inside baby's mouth?** Is the baby breastfeeding continuously? (with good attachment, only a small bit of the upper part of the areola will be clearly seen. Usually, a healthy, full term baby will suckle 10-15 times before pausing to swallow)
5. **Is the baby sleeping while breastfeeding?** (a hungry, healthy baby will not normally fall asleep before emptying out at least one breast. Even if she does fall asleep, she will wake up again and start suckling vigorously. A healthy baby can empty one breast completely and second breast at least partly during each feed)



10 Minute

How to observe breastfeeding?



1. Is the mother sitting or lying comfortably?
2. Is the baby's body well supported for breastfeeding?
3. Is the baby's head bent a little backward?
4. Is the major part of areola (black area around the nipple) inside baby's mouth?
Is the baby breastfeeding continuously?
5. Is the baby sleeping while breastfeeding?





How does a weak newborn breastfeed?



After observing the healthy baby, repeat the observations on the weak newborn baby, guiding the participants using the points on the right.

If the weak newborn is younger than one month old, take care to see that participants observe the breastfeeding from a distance, and do not touch the baby.

If a weak newborn is not available for observation, simply discuss the differences between a healthy baby and a weak newborn, using the points on the right.

1. Is the mother sitting or lying comfortably?
2. Is the baby well supported for feeding? (a weak newborn requires more careful support. The baby should lie supported on one hand, and the other hand should be used for positioning the breast carefully for the baby to feed easily).
3. Is the baby's head bent a little backwards?
4. Is the major part of areola (black area around the nipple) inside baby's mouth? Is the baby breastfeeding continuously? (if the baby is small, she will not be able to take the whole areola in the mouth. A small baby will suck a few times and pause to swallow and to rest)
5. Is the baby sleeping while breastfeeding? (a small baby will feed slowly, take much longer to finish a feed, and will tend to fall asleep many times during a feed. She will need to be woken up repeatedly. The baby may not be able to completely empty even one breast at a time. But such babies will need to be fed more often – every hour or even at a lesser interval.)



10 Minute

How does a weak newborn breastfeed?





What is the difference between breastfeeding by a weak newborn and a sick newborn?



Display the card.

Tell the participants that it should now be clear that weak babies are weak feeders.



Ask,

Which babies other than small and weak babies can not breastfeed vigorously?

Allow some discussion. Summarize the discussions by pointing out that other than small and weak babies, if a baby is not breastfeeding well, it is probably because the baby is sick.

Use the points on the right to discuss the difference in breastfeeding between a weak baby and a sick baby. Make sure that all participants understand the difference clearly.

Emphasize that it is therefore important to observe breastfeeding in a newborn baby, so that one can decide whether the baby can be cared for at home or should be rushed to a hospital.

Two kinds of babies do not breastfeed strongly:

1. Weak babies:

- Some babies are born weak – either born too early or too small
- They do not breastfeed as strongly as babies born at full term or having good birth weight
- One can see that these babies are weak feeders right from the day on which they are born

2. Sick babies:

- Babies can fall sick anytime after birth, but usually do not fall sick in the first two days
- Any baby can fall sick, whether or not she was born weak, but those who are born weak are more likely to fall sick
- A baby may have been feeding well after birth, but when the baby falls sick, she loses interest in breastfeeding.

Thus we can see that:

- A baby who is not breastfeeding vigorously from the day of birth is a baby who is born weak. Most of these babies can be cared for at home.
- A baby who was feeding well for the first few days, but later has lost interest in breastfeeding has probably fallen sick. Such babies can die if not immediately treated at the hospital.



10 Minute

What is the difference between breastfeeding by a weak newborn and a sick newborn?





When should we observe breastfeeding?



Display the card.

Explain that now that we have understood the importance of breastfeeding; let us discuss how we should apply our knowledge.



Ask participants to read each question and discuss.

- What opportunities do we get to observe breastfeeding in newborn babies?
- Can breastfeeding be observed at birth in a hospital? Who should observe this at the hospital?
- Can breastfeeding be observed after a home delivery? Who should observe this at home?
- Loss of interest in breastfeeding is a sign of serious sickness. Who should observe breastfeeding in a child who may have fallen sick few days after birth?
- What problems are we likely to face when we try to observe breastfeeding? Will families object to this? How can we overcome this problem?

Encourage discussion among participants.

After a few minutes of discussion, move on to the next card.



10 Minute

When should we observe breastfeeding?



- Who should observe breastfeeding in babies born in a hospital?
- Who should observe breastfeeding in babies born at home?
- Who should observe breastfeeding in babies who fall sick at home?





Summary: Observation of breastfeeding



Display the card.



Ask participants to read each point and explain any points they may not have understood.

If necessary, once again observe a mother breastfeeding her baby. If a weak newborn is available, take the opportunity of observing the baby breastfeed.



5 Minute

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Observing Breastfeeding In Newborn Babies

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Summary: Observation of breastfeeding



Observation of breastfeeding in a newborn baby helps us identify:

- **Weak or small babies who require extra care at home**
- **Sick babies who require treatment in a hospital**
 - Advice those mothers who are facing problems in breastfeeding.
- **What to observe:**
 - Mother is comfortably sitting or lying down
 - Baby is fully supported
 - Attachment between mother and baby is good
 - Baby is feeding vigorously
 - Baby does not fall asleep frequently
- **When to observe:**
 - Immediately after birth
 - Whenever the mother complains that her baby is not well



Action Points for next month – 1

Observe breastfeeding on the day of birth (Institutional Birth)



- We will visit the mother of the newborn baby at home within a day of returning from the hospital
- We will find out if the family has been advised at the hospital about any special care to be taken
- We will request the mother to feed the baby in our presence and observe the breastfeeding





Action Points for next month – 1

Observe breastfeeding on the day of birth (Institutional Birth)



Display the card.

Explain that this is the first action point for the next month.

Use the points on the right to guide the participants to understand what needs to be done.

- Every month, you will have 1-2 institutional deliveries in your area
- Visit the home of the newborn baby to meet the mother within a day of returning from the hospital
- In most cases, the baby is weighed in the hospital and the family is counseled in case the baby is weak or if s/he requires extra care. Enquire if this has been done.
- In some cases, the baby may not be weighed or the family may not have been counseled on the need for special care.
- Request the mother to breastfeed the baby in your presence, and quietly observe the breastfeeding for 10-15 minutes, in the same way we practiced today
- If the baby is asleep when you visit the home, or has just been breastfed, visit again 1-2 hours later, telling the mother that you would like to observe her breastfeeding her baby.



5 Minute



Action Points for next month – 2

Observe breastfeeding on the day of birth (In case of home delivery)



Display the card.

Explain that this is the second action point for the next month.

Use the points on the right to guide the participants to understand what needs to be done.

- Sometimes, women in your area may deliver at home, and some of these deliveries may not be attended by a doctor or nurse
- It becomes your responsibility to make sure that the family takes proper care of the baby at birth
- In case of home delivery, if you have informed the family to call you as soon as the labor pains begin, then you may be able to observe all newborn care practices at birth.
- In any case, try and visit the family as soon as possible after delivery.
- Find out whether the baby was breastfed immediately after birth, and whether anything other than the breast milk has been given to the baby.
- Request the mother to breastfeed the baby in your presence, and quietly observe the breastfeed for 10-15 minutes, in the way we practiced today.
- If the baby is asleep when you visit the home, or has just been breastfed, visit again 1-2 hours later, telling the mother that you would like to observe her breastfeeding her baby.



5 Minute

Action Points for next month – 2



Observe breastfeeding on the day of birth (In case of home delivery)

- We will visit the mother of the newborn baby at the earliest – if possible, we will remain present at birth
- We will observe whether the baby has been breastfed immediately after birth
- We will request the mother to feed the baby in our presence and observe the breastfeeding – if possible, we will observe the first breastfeeding after birth





Action Points for next month - 3

Observe breastfeeding when a baby falls sick



Display the card.

Explain that this is the third action point for the next month.

Use the points on the right to guide the participants to understand what needs to be done.

- Sometimes, a baby can fall sick in the first few weeks after birth. Sickness at this time can be dangerous for babies.
- If the sickness is serious, it is often possible to save the baby's life only by seeking treatment immediately at a hospital.
- If you inform families to call you home immediately if they feel the baby is not well, they will call you.
- Visit the home as soon as you get such information.
- Request the mother to breastfeed the baby in your presence, and quietly observe the breastfeeding for 10-15 minutes, in the same way we practiced today
- If the baby is asleep when you visit the home, or has just been breastfed, visit again 1-2 hours later, telling the mother that you would like to observe her breastfeeding her baby.
- If the baby does not wake up and take a good feed within two hours, advise the family that they must not wait any longer, and they must immediately seek care at an appropriate hospital.



5 Minute

Action Points for next month - 3



Observe breastfeeding when a baby falls sick

- Whenever we come to know that a newborn baby is sick, we will visit her home as soon as possible
- We will request the mother to feed the baby in our presence and observe the breastfeeding
- If the baby is not breastfeeding well, we will advise the family to rush to a hospital



- 1 *Why this Monthly Meeting ?*
- 2 *Making or updating Home Visit Planner & Initiating Home Visits*
- 3 *Planning and Organizing Community Based Events at AWC*
- 4 **Observing Breastfeeding in Newborn Babies - Why and How**
- 5 *Identification and Care of a Weak Newborn baby*
- 6 *Complementary Feeding: Diet Diversity*
- 7 *Preventing Anemia in Women*
- 8 *Assessment of Growth in Children*
- 9 *Ensuring that Complementary Feeding improves over time*
- 10 *Ensuring Exclusive Breastfeeding*
- 11 *Care of the Weak Newborn Baby - How many weak babies are we missing?*
- 12 *How to ensure timely initiation of Complementary Feeding*
- 13 *Identifying and preventing Severe Acute Malnutrition*
- 14 *Feeding During Illness*
- 15 *Supporting mothers with issues in Breastfeeding*
- 16 *How to take care of weak newborn with the help of Kangaroo Mother Care*
- 17 *Identification & Referral of Sick Newborn*
- 18 *Preventing illnesses to avert Malnutrition and Death*
- 19 *Prevention of Anemia in girls and adolescents*
- 20 *Birth Preparedness- For Institutional and Home Delivery*
- 21 *Preparation During Pregnancy: For NewBorn Care & Family Planning*

