

Health

It's Jewish to Nurse

Sara Chana Silverstein

Amazingly, recent studies being conducted in Israel have found that among the geriatric crowd, there appears to be a difference in the way formula babies and breast-fed babies age! Certain diseases are appearing in formula fed senior citizens that are not prevalent in breast-fed seniors. Similar studies are seeing a difference in adolescent development as well.

According to the Talmud, (Yerushalmi, Brachot 68A) "A Jew should be involved in Torah every hour of the day just as a baby nurses every hour of the day." From this we can begin to see that just as learning Torah is the path of the Jew, so too is nursing our children.

I believe that breast-feeding is Jewish, and that formulas are a secular American invention. With close investigation, one sees that formula companies began out of a desire for women to be "independent, like men." Formula development began aggressively with women's right to vote in America. Smart businessmen took advantage of women's new-found independence and social status and helped them "get out of the house." Then with the advent of technological and scientific advancement and clever advertising companies, women were convinced that formula is comparable to mother's milk. This is untrue; formula does not equal mother's milk. They are not interchangeable at all and do not even contain the same ingredients!

I'd like to introduce myself to you and let you know about the services I now offer to the Brooklyn area. I am a breast-feeding counselor who can help breast-feeding women with their questions either over the phone or with a home visit. The benefit of home visits is that I can assess the baby's positioning, make sure the baby is suckling properly, and teach women to prevent cracked nipples, engorgement, breast infections, etc. Each mother and baby's relationship is unique, and although there are certain do's and don'ts that can help all women, many women find questions and problems come up that need personal answers.

I believe all women who choose to breast-feed can do so pain-free, and most mothers can successfully nurse the babies Hashem has given to them. According to the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 81:7), "A child may nurse if healthy until four years old; a sickly or weak child until five years old." Most sources point toward twenty-four months as the accepted minimum length. Even the most lenient of authorities points to the age when a baby has six to eight

teeth (usually between the ages of ten to sixteen months.)

All babies, even pre-mature babies, have a natural desire to nurse, but some must be taught to suckle or latch on properly. This is usually a problem that can be corrected in one or two house visits. In the case of premature babies, we now have ways of finger feeding the newborn their own mother's milk. This helps ease the transition to the breast when the baby is strong enough to nurse directly.

I've also seen that engorgement, once thought to be a normal part of beginning nursing, can be totally eradicated if the baby is latching on properly and really draining the breast.

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I have trained at St. Vincent's Hospital, belong to the International Association of Lactation Consultants and stay current on studies and research. I attend work shops and seminars to be able to offer women every possible solution to every kind of problem.

It is not embarrassing to need help with nursing a baby. I get calls constantly from moms who say, "I nursed my first six with such pain, can I really nurse this one pain-free?" or, "I could not nurse my first three, all my sisters and sisters-in-law can nurse so easily. I'm afraid to try with this one."

Also, "My doctor said I must not have enough milk, my last baby became dehydrated, can I take a chance with this one?" (Babies can get dehydrated if they are only latching on to the nipple and not getting the milk out - it is extremely rare that a baby who is truly latching on will get dehydrated. All women can learn to assess whether or not their baby is getting enough milk). Currently I am teaching breast-feeding classes at OBGYN offices and plan to start teaching in the Crown Heights area. I also make hospital and home visits as needed. For more information, feel free to call me at 718-467-1455 or page me at 917-388-7650.

Sara Chana Silverstein Lactation Counselor

Phone consultations and home visits



718-467-1455

Pager 1-917-388-7650

Available to assist with all your breast-feeding questions and problems