

Encouraging Your Patients to Breastfeed



For every pregnant mother: **“Have you thought about how you are going to feed your baby?”**

Planning to just formula feed

Goal: get patient to think about breastfeeding

- **Validate** lack of readiness: *I understand you are not planning to breastfeed.*
- **Clarify:** *It is your decision how you feed your baby.*
- **Encourage** re-evaluation: *As your doctor, I strongly advise you to breastfeed your baby. The best food for your baby is your breast milk.*
- **Give information:** (for example) *Babies who are formula fed are sick more often.*
- **Personalize** the risk: (for example) *Breastfeeding can help reduce your risk of getting breast cancer. This is especially important for you since you have a family history of breast cancer.*

Undecided

Goal: get patient to consider breastfeeding

- **Validate** lack of readiness: *I understand you are not sure about breastfeeding.*
- **Clarify:** *It is your decision how you feed your baby.*
- **Encourage** re-evaluation: *As your doctor, I strongly advise you to breastfeed your baby. The best food for your baby is your breast milk.*
- **Give information:** (for example) *Babies who are formula fed are sick more often.*
- **Personalize** the risk: (for example) *Breastfeeding can help reduce your risk of getting breast cancer. This is especially important for you since you have a family history of breast cancer.*

Planning to breastfeed and formula feed

Goal: get patient to consider just breastfeeding

- **Verify** ability: *Most moms can successfully breastfeed without using formula.*
- **Identify** obstacles to just breastfeeding: *Why are you thinking about using both?*
- **Assist** with problem solving: *A lot of moms find it helpful to talk to another mom who has had the same concerns.*
- **Refer** to breastfeeding peer counselor to address concerns.
- **Encourage:** *I completely support your decision to breastfeed your baby.*

Planning to just breastfeed

Goal: support the patient in her decision

- **Encourage:** *I completely support your decision to breastfeed your baby.*
- **Verify** ability: *Most moms can successfully breastfeed.*
- **Identify** obstacles and assist with problem solving: *Do you have any concerns about breastfeeding?.*
- **Help** identify social support: *How does your family feel about you breastfeeding? Who will you turn to for help if you need it?*
- **Assist** with problem solving: *A lot of moms find it helpful to talk to another mom who has successfully breastfed.*
 - **Refer** to breastfeeding peer counselor to answer questions.
 - **Give information** for starting breastfeeding after delivery.