

Induced breastfeeding



User Rating: ○○○○○ / 0

Poor ○○○○○ Best (Rate)

FEATURES - FEATURES

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 21 December 2010 06:12

SHARE

AsiaViews, Edition: 19/VII/August2010

Category: LIFE

LIKE other new mums, Sally (not her real name) shared a fulfilling breastfeeding relationship with her newborn baby.

But unlike them, she did not go through pregnancy and the painful process of childbirth. Sally adopted her son Andrew four years ago, when he was just two weeks old. The names have been changed to protect their identities.

When Sally held him in her arms for the first time, she knew for certain that she would treat Andrew like her own. So she made the decision to breastfeed him.

"I've never felt like I was an adoptive mum, so like any biological mother, I wanted to give him the best. Through breastfeeding, I was able to build that mother-and-child bond with my baby," said Sally, who is in her early 40s.

To induce lactation, she consulted a doctor and a lactation consultant, and took a combination of medication. It was a tough process, but she was "mentally prepared".

Said Sally: "I strongly wanted to breastfeed my baby. Realising the benefits of breastfeeding helped me to overcome all difficulties."

Such cases are rare in Singapore. But lactation experts Today spoke to said it is possible to induce lactation.

At KK Women's and Children's Hospital, lactation consultant Cynthia Pang, who is also the assistant director of nursing, said the hospital sees about two to three such cases each year. It saw five cases last year.

Betty Lee, a lactation consultant in private practice, said induced lactation is not new. The practice dates back to centuries ago. In some countries, women do it to care for orphaned babies.

"Most of the adoptive mums we see choose this option to enhance the mother-child bonding. They also hope to provide breast milk to build up the health and immunity of the baby," said Ms Pang.

According to Ms Lee, any breast milk a baby receives is nutritious, regardless of the source.

"Breast milk contains antibodies, nutrients and enzymes that aid a baby's development. The nutritional value of breast milk (from the natural or non-biological mother) is the same, although an adoptive mum may find it hard to produce sufficient milk to breastfeed exclusively," she said.

'Tricking' the body to produce milk

The main challenge that adoptive mums face is to produce a good supply of breast milk and maintaining it.

Most natural mums who go through pregnancy and childbirth have no problems doing so, because the body naturally goes through hormonal changes.

"During pregnancy, progesterone and oestrogen are at high levels. These are the hormones which support the pregnancy. The breasts are also prepared for lactation at this point by increasing in size," explained Ms Lee.

When the baby is delivered, she continued, these hormones levels drop immediately. "This is when another hormone, prolactin, is released to activate the milk cells in the breasts to produce milk."

Women who attempt to induce lactation go through a process which mimics these hormonal changes.

If a woman knows when she will be adopting a newborn, Ms Pang advised preparing four to five months in advance.

She said: "A combination of progesterone-oestrogen pills and domperidone (a medication which triggers the milk hormones, prolactin) is used to prepare the mother's breast to produce milk."

About six to eight weeks before the baby is due, the progesterone-oestrogen in the body is stopped. Domperidone continues to boost the milk hormones. This is also when the adoptive mum is encouraged to stimulate her milk production with a milk pump, said Ms Pang.

In the initial stages, Sally used a lactation aid to provide additional milk for her baby. Most adoptive mums will need to use this, said Ms Pang.

A lactation aid is a supplementary nursing system which comprises a bottle containing formula. The milk is dispensed through two tiny tubes attached close to the nipples to provide additional milk to the baby during breastfeeding.

search...

Follow us on:

Views

The Latest Edition on ePapers



Latest Magazine

- Magazine October-November 2011
- Magazine September - October 2011
- Magazine August - Sept 2011
- Magazine July - August 2011
- Magazine May - June 2011
- Magazine April - May 2011
- Magazine March - April 2011
- Magazine Feb - March 2011

Features

- The T Awards - The Arts
- UNESCO evaluates I La Galigo manuscript for World Cultural Heritage
- The courage to care
- An insight with every bite
- Activist held after release from prison
- The world of <i>nyai</i>, the world of sorrow
- Hereditary politics are a reflection of feudalism
- Banned movie gets cremated in public
- Articles of faith
- Drinking in the 21st century
- Saving the jungle giant
- Long-awaited penal code to go into effect
- Principles of taste
- Unhealthy practices should be stopped
- Festival closes with Night of the Year
- City officials dress over silk heritage success
- Sorrow in the land of deserts
- The little girl returns
- Suthep: Thai forgers not alone
- Voice of reason
- The benefits outweigh the disadvantages
- Pop rocks
- Whale hunting on the Sawu Sea
- SIM cards as status symbols

"The sucking reflex of the baby will further stimulate the mother's own milk production," said Ms Pang.

No walk in the park

The process, warned lactation experts, can be an arduous one.

"The adoptive mum will encounter more challenges than a natural mum, especially during the initial phase of stimulating milk supply," said Ms Pang.

And sometimes, even after all that effort, Ms Lee said an adoptive mum may not be able to produce sufficient milk.

But for many adoptive mums, breastfeeding isn't just about providing their babies adequate nutrients.

"It's also the bonding and satisfaction they get from nursing their babies," said Ms Lee.

After three months, Sally's perseverance paid off. The experience of finally producing breast milk "was very emotional and heart-warming", she said.

Although she did not produce sufficient milk to breastfeed exclusively, she continued to nurse her baby until he was a year old.

"Now my boy is four years old, bright and bubbly. I have no regrets," she said.

How safe is induced lactation?

According to Dr Wee Horng Yen, consultant and director of KKH's KK Women Wellness Centre, studies have shown that the progesterone-estrogen pill, which is also an oral contraceptive, is safe to use.

Furthermore, as the pills are taken before lactation occurs, they will not affect the baby. Studies looking at the long-term safety of domperidone, which stimulates the milk hormones, on mother and babies have also not shown conclusive evidence of harmful effects in humans.

By: Eveline Gan

Today 03 August 2010

Last Updated (Tuesday, 21 December 2010 06:12)

- Global carbon dioxide emissions drop 1.3 percent in 2009
- The gangs of Jakarta
- Cooking up a storm
- ?If we want change, we have to make it happen?
- Surreal world of broken and toppled chairs
- Asean youth empowerment
- Young thugs need to feel the fear now
- Postal service to get electric motorbikes
- Retweet gets bride labor camp
- Mind over matter
- We must create an American Muslim culture
- Young artist inspired by traditional beliefs
- Preserving the pinisi
- A larger, smarter, younger population?
- Students help revive Vietnam's mangroves
- Milk activist sentenced
- Defamation VS Democracy
- Timur Pradopo: The case of the fat bank accounts will be firmly dealt with
- Traces of the diary of a wanderer
- ASEAN's first Symphony Orchestra
- Hill tribe hits a high point
- Living with depression
- Bags to grab
- Shadrake found guilty of contempt of court
- Super snapper
- China wants a stable North Korea