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ILCA's INSIDE TRACK

a resource for breastfeeding mothers

A Publication of the International
Lactation Consultant Association



When to See a Lactation Consultant

By Phyllis Kombol, RNC, MSN, IBCLC; Judith Lauwers, BA, IBCLC; Patricia Berg-Drazin, IBCLC

Congratulations! Breastfeeding is the best start for you and your baby. Do you have questions or problems? Do you feel a bit overwhelmed? You don't have to do this alone. Help is only as far away as the nearest lactation consultant!

What's a Lactation Consultant?

You might first want to know what a lactation consultant is and what she does. Most lactation consultants are women. Some are also doctors or nurses. Lactation consultants help mothers and babies with breastfeeding. They teach classes to parents. They visit with mothers to help them learn how to breastfeed. They send reports to your doctors about problems and the plan you will follow. Lactation consultants work in hospitals,

clinics, and doctors' offices. Some have a private practice and will help you in their office or visit you in your home.

You can get help before your baby is born if:

- You want to learn as much as you can about breastfeeding.
- You had a hard time nursing a baby in the past.
- You expect more than one baby or a baby who may be sick or early.
- You have had breast surgery and wonder if it will affect your breastfeeding.
- You think your breasts or nipples look odd to you or are very different from each other.
- You worry that something about your health might make it hard to breastfeed.

A lactation consultant:

... may be called an LC.

... takes special classes about breastfeeding.

... takes a test to become certified as an IBCLC (International Board Certified Lactation Consultant).



You can get help after you are home if:

- You and/or your baby are having a hard time with breastfeeding.
- Your breasts or nipples hurt.
- Your baby is not gaining weight very well.
- You are worried about how your baby acts during or after feeding.
- You are worried that you might have too much or too little milk.
- Your doctor or your baby's doctor sends you for help.
- You and/or your baby are put in the hospital during the time you are a nursing couple.

A lactation consultant can:

- Explain what may have caused a problem.
- Suggest choices to help you correct a problem.

- Work with you to decide on a plan of care.
- Suggest supplies or tools you can use.
- Give you written instructions to take home.
- Tell you how to call back if you have questions or more trouble after you get home.
- Tell you when to check in again.

WHAT IF...?

CALL BACK the lactation consultant *if*:

...a problem does not seem to get better

...a different problem comes up

...you find you can't do the plan of care you decided on

...you have questions

FIND HELP FAST

Go to "***Find a Lactation Consultant***" at <http://www.ilca.org> to locate a lactation consultant in your area. You can also ask your doctor or a nurse at your hospital.

Your Local Lactation Consultant