
Breastfeeding Made Simple
Kathleen Kendall-Tackett


Why do we need a different approach?


4 million births per year in the U.S.

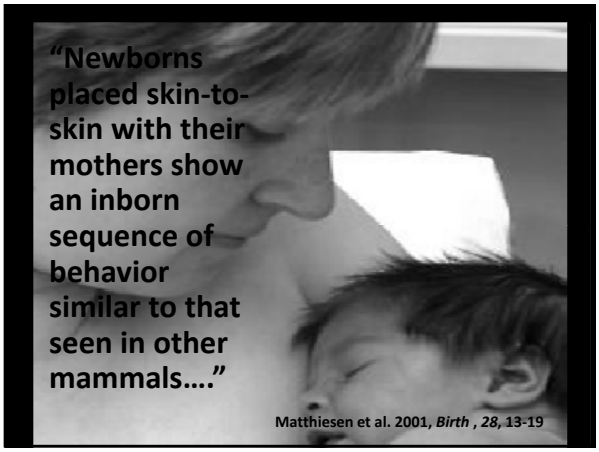

77% initiate


Exclusive Breastfeeding

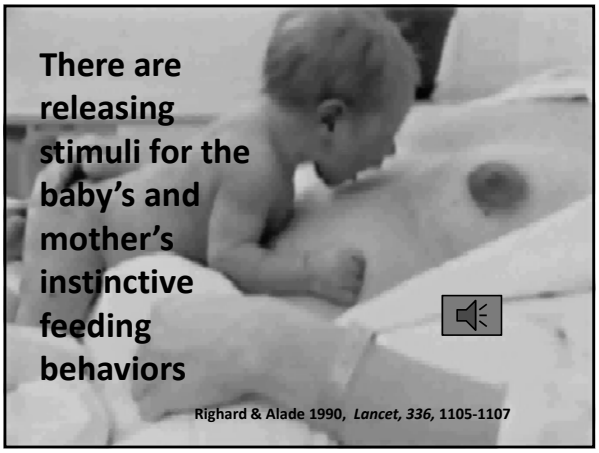

• Bottle-feeding norms
• Basic concepts unclear
• Mothers receiving conflicting advice


Provide a mammalian framework independent of culture

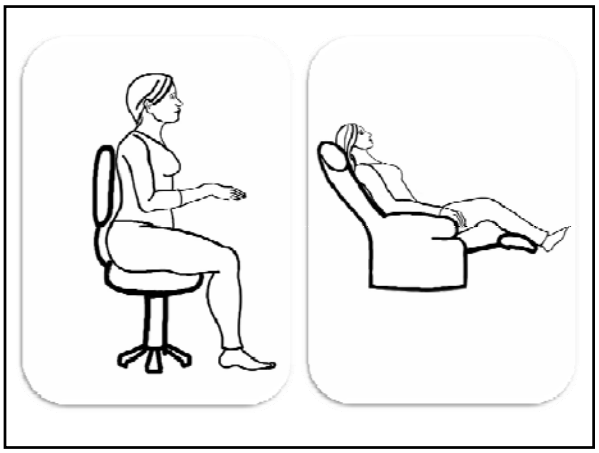

Law #1
Babies and Mothers are Hardwired to Breastfeed

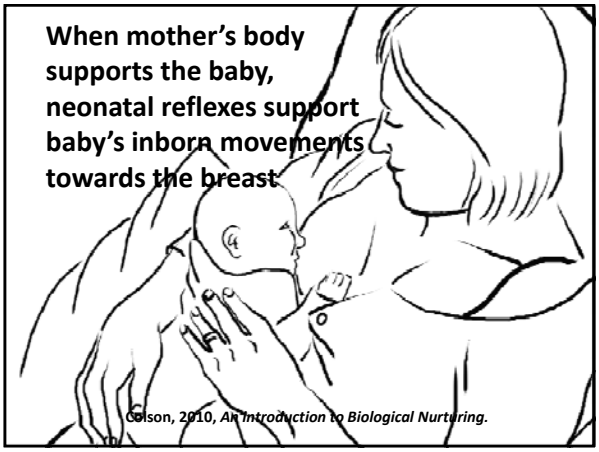

"Newborns placed skin-to-skin with their mothers show an inborn sequence of behavior similar to that seen in other mammals…."
Matthiesen et al. 2001, *Birth* , *28*, 13-19

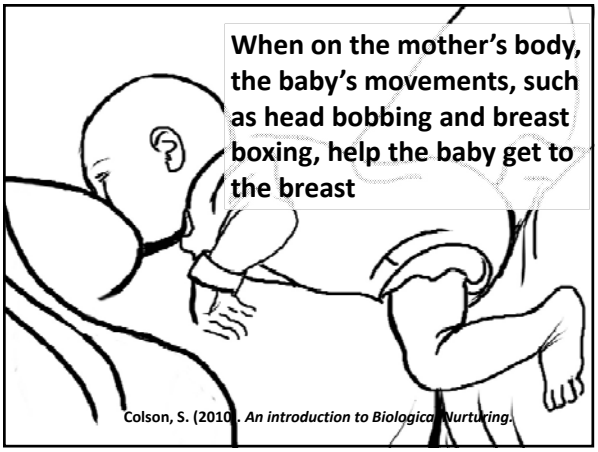

Babies and mothers know how to do

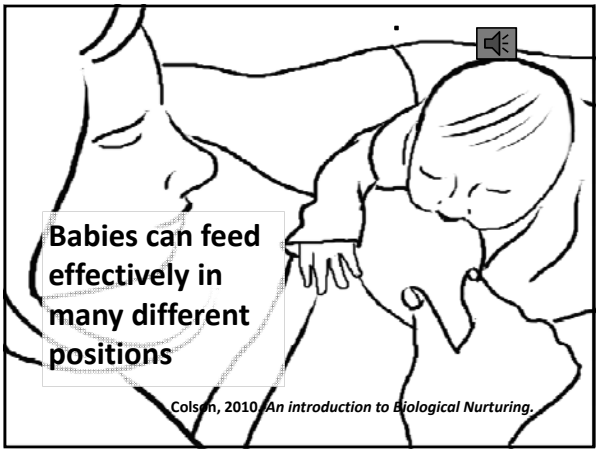

There are releasing stimuli for the baby's and mother's instinctive feeding behaviors
Righard & Alade 1990, *Lancet, 336,* 1105-1107


Mother's position either helps or hinders baby's feeding behaviors




When mother's body supports the baby, neonatal reflexes support baby's inborn movements towards the breast
Colson, 2010, An Introduction to Biological Nurturing.

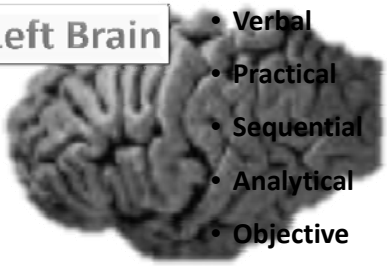

When on the mother's body, the baby's movements, such as head bobbing and breast boxing, help the baby get to the breast
Colson, S. (2010). An introduction to Biological Nurturing.


Babies can feed effectively in many different positions
Colson, 2010. An introduction to Biological Nurturing.


• Left-brained instructions
• Mother-led feeding
• Unstable hold

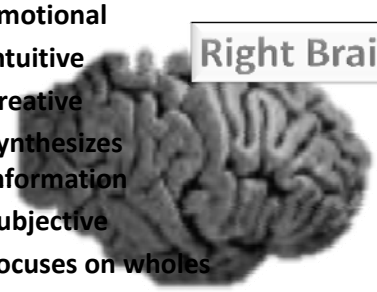
Humans are the only mammals that can choose to not breastfeed

Left Brain

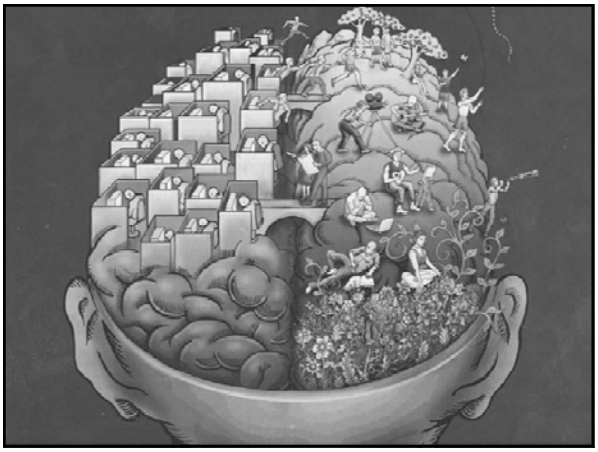


- Logical
- Verbal
- Practical
- Sequential
- Analytical
- Objective
- Focuses on parts
- Detail oriented

Right Brain



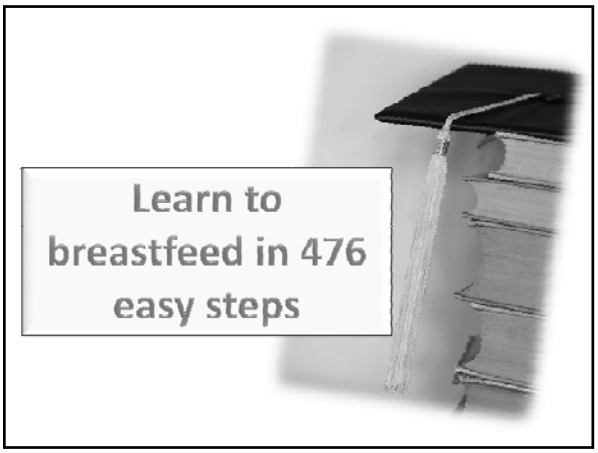
- Emotional
- Intuitive
- Creative
- Synthesizes information
- Subjective
- Focuses on wholes
- "Big picture" oriented
- Symbols and images

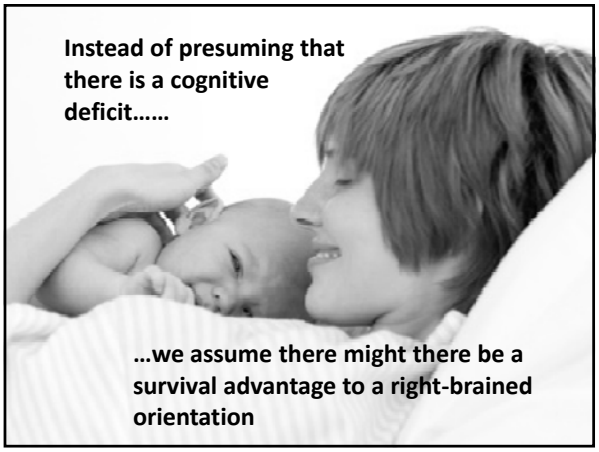


Mothers are in Right-Brain Mode Postpartum

While we are often in Left-Brain Mode


What mothers hear
What?


Learn to breastfeed in 476 easy steps


Instead of presuming that there is a cognitive deficit……
…we assume there might there be a survival advantage to a right-brained orientation

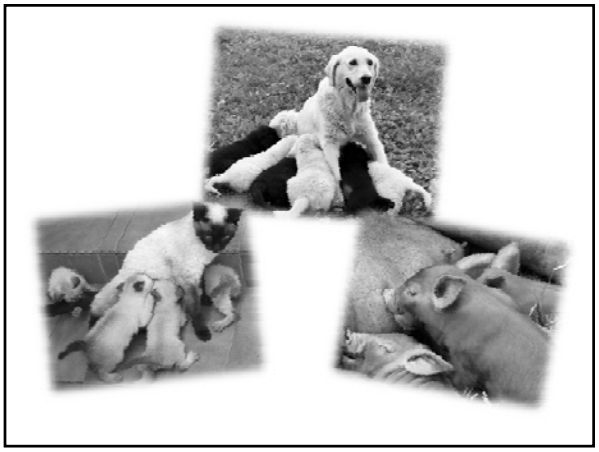

The right brain facilitates emotional attachment

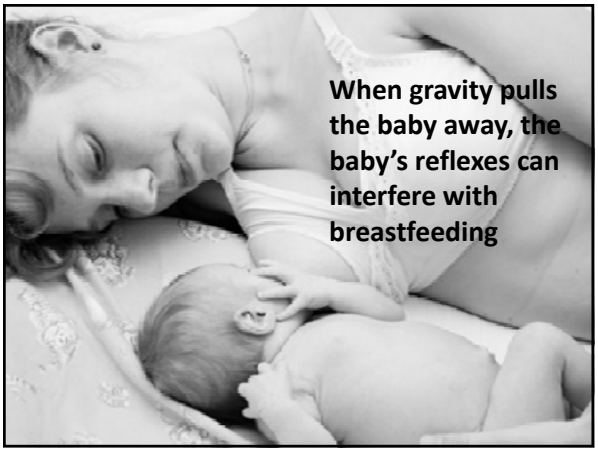

Breastfeeding is a Right-Brained Activity


• Early hunger cues
• Calm and open to interacting


• Mother encourages instinctive behaviors
• She strokes, talks, and makes eye contact


Babies feed well on their tummies
Colson, 2010, An introduction to Biological Nurturing.




When gravity pulls the baby away, the baby's reflexes can interfere with breastfeeding


Pediatrician Christina Smillie discovered that these behaviors can be reactivated for several weeks after birth

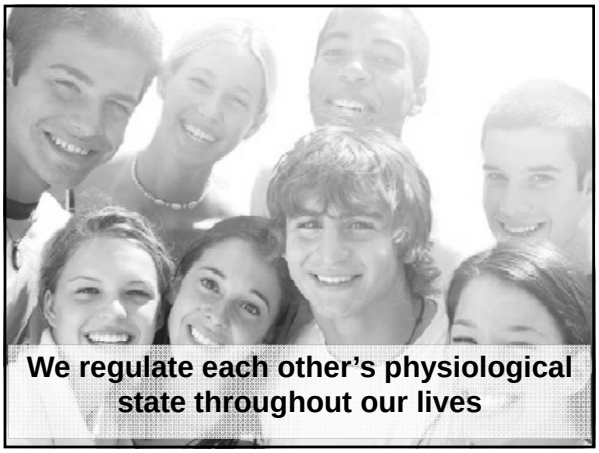

Law #2
Mother's body is the baby's natural habitat


Mother and baby regulate each other's physiology


Study in India, 135 pre-term LBW babies
• Improved O_2 sats
• Stabilized temperature and respiration
• Lowered heart rate
• Babies cried less and slept more
Parmar et al. 2009 *Indian J Pediatrics,* 76(4):25-28


• More breastfeeding
• Closer to their babies
• Improved mood
• More confident
Parmar et al. *2009, Indian J Pediatrics,* 76(1), 25-28

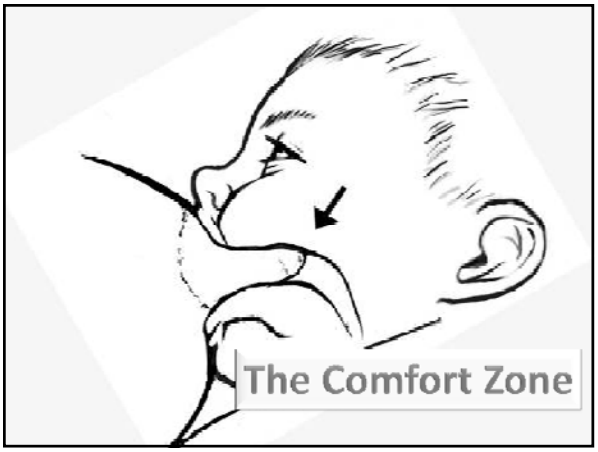

Sleep cycles synchronize
Less deep sleep
A more variable experience
McKenna. *Encyclopedia of Med Anthro* 2004: 506-517


We regulate each other's physiological state throughout our lives


Married people have a lower premature mortality rate
Higher rates of diabetes and MI in people without social connections

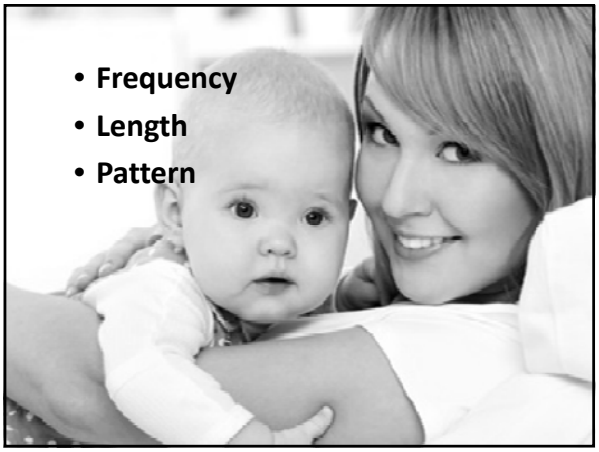
"Adults remain social animals; they continue to require a source of stabilization outside themselves. That open-loop design means that in some important ways, people cannot be stable on their own—not should or shouldn't be, but *can't* be."

Lewis, Amini, Lannon, 2000, *A General Theory of Love,* p. 86

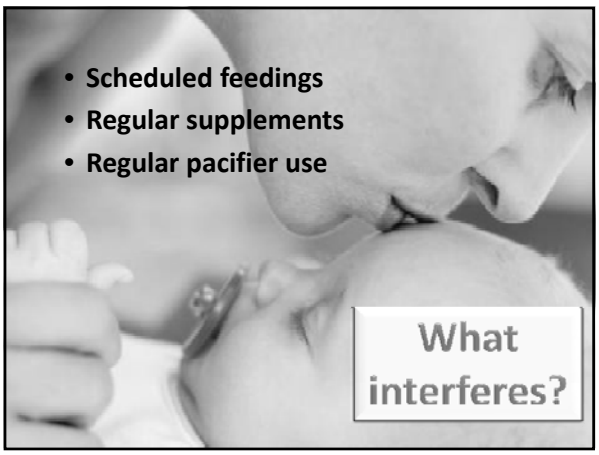


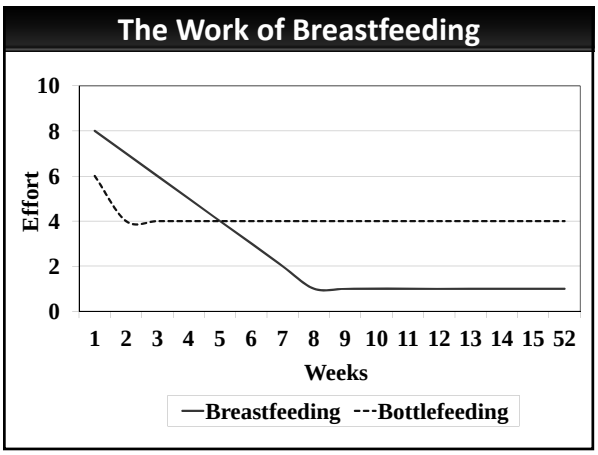

• Labor medications
• Separation
• Hospital routines
• Cultural assumptions


Law #5
Every Breastfeeding Couple has its Own Rhythm

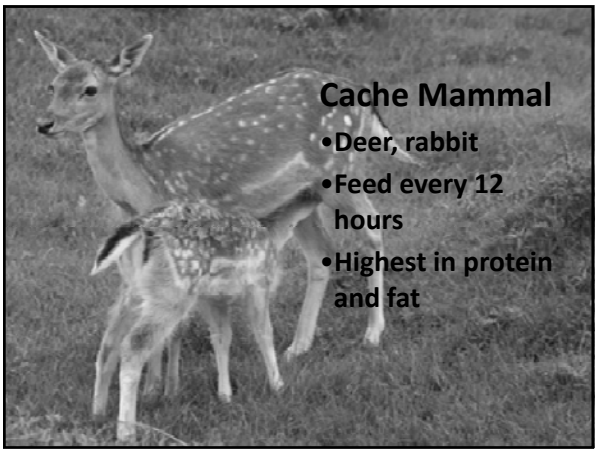

• Frequency
• Length
• Pattern


Baby's rhythm of breast drainage plays a major role in adjusting supply


• Scheduled feedings
• Regular supplements
• Regular pacifier use
What interferes?

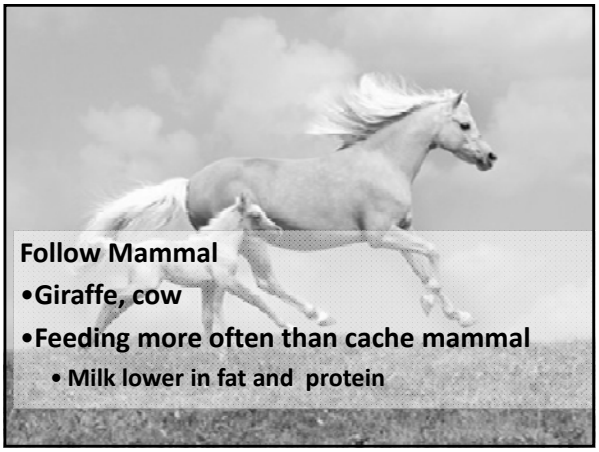

The Work of Breastfeeding
Effort
10
8
6
4
2
0
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 52
Weeks
—Breastfeeding ---Bottlefeeding

Pattern of feeding in mammals determined by maturity at birth and composition of milk



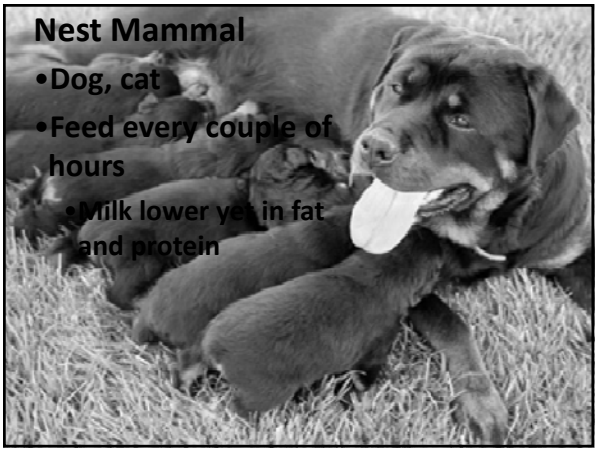
Cache Mammal

- **Deer, rabbit**
- **Feed every 12 hours**
- **Highest in protein and fat**



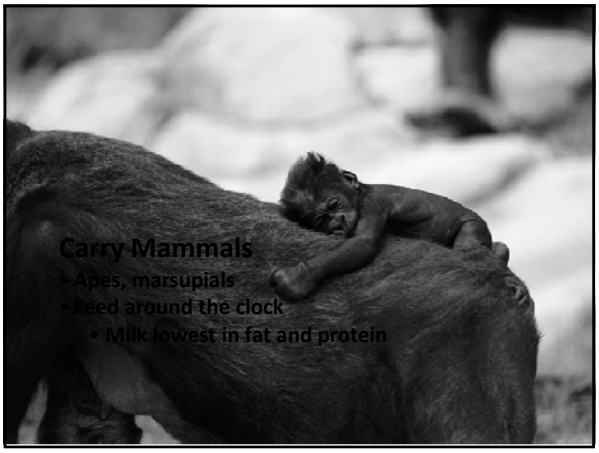
Follow Mammal

- **Giraffe, cow**
- **Feeding more often than cache mammal**
  - **Milk lower in fat and protein**



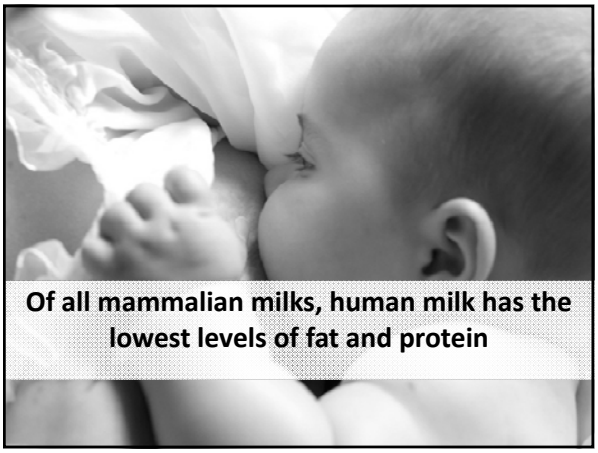
Nest Mammal

- **Dog, cat**
- **Feed every couple of hours**
  - **Milk lower yet in fat and protein**



Carry Mammals

- **Apes, marsupials**
- **Feed around the clock**
  - **Milk lowest in fat and protein**

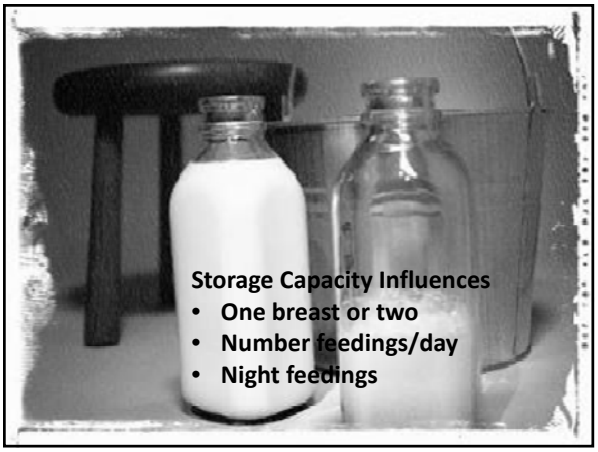


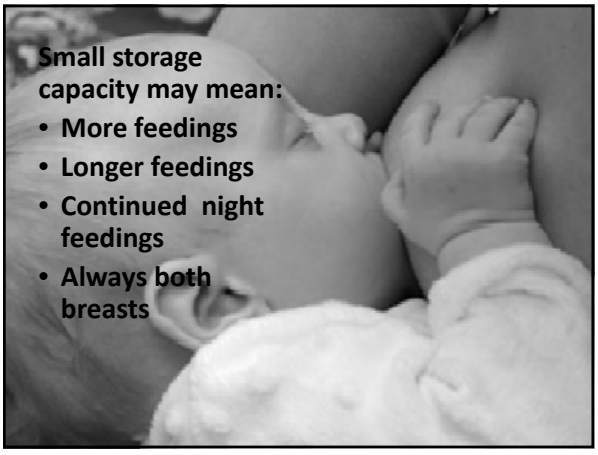
Of all mammalian milks, human milk has the lowest levels of fat and protein

More Milk Out Equals More Milk Made

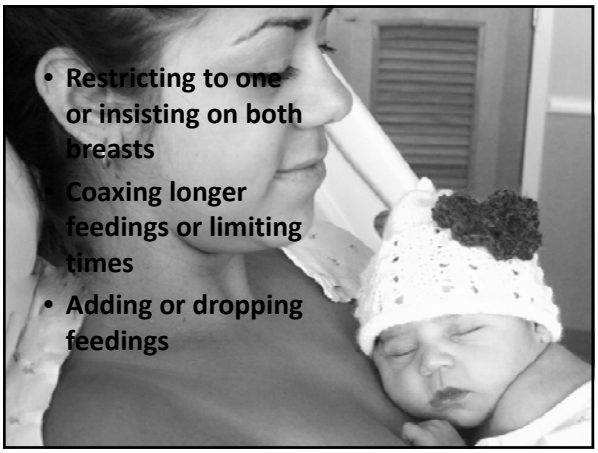
- **Bottle-feeding, regardless of the type of milk, affects infants' self-regulation of milk**
- **Study of 1205 infants**
  - **27% of EBF infants emptied bottle or cup in late infancy**
  - **54% of infants fed by bottle and breast**
  - **68% of infants fed by bottle only**

Li et al. *Pediatrics* 2010: 125; e1368-e1393.

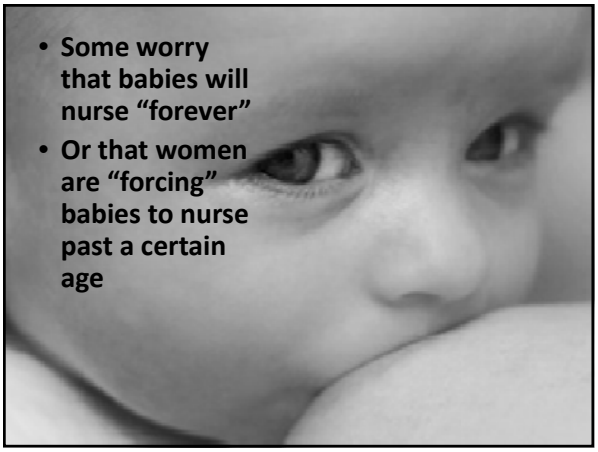





What happens when mothers try to be average?

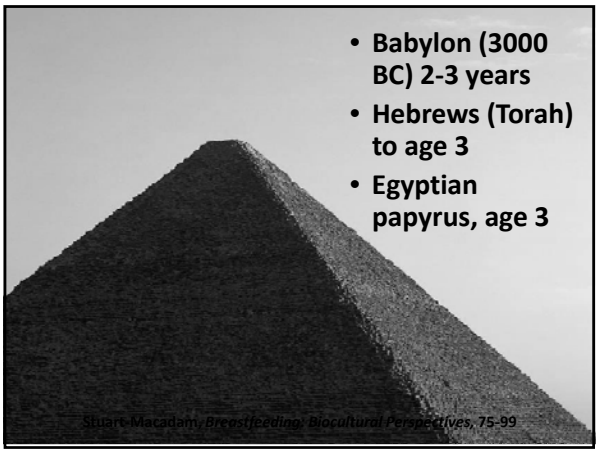

• Restricting to one or insisting on both breasts
• Coaxing longer feedings or limiting times
• Adding or dropping feedings


Law #7
Children Wean Naturally


• Some worry that babies will nurse "forever"
• Or that women are "forcing" babies to nurse past a certain age


• American Academy of Pediatrics
• World Health Organization


Later weaning is the dominant pattern


• Babylon (3000 BC) 2-3 years
• Hebrews (Torah) to age 3
• Egyptian papyrus, age 3
Stuart-Macadam, *Breastfeeding: Biocultural Perspectives*, 75-99


Ayurvedic texts (1500 to 800 BC) recommend only breast milk for first year, breast milk and solids for second year, gradual weaning after that
Stuart-Macadam, *Breastfeeding: Biocultural Perspectives*, 75-99


• Byzantium (400 to 700 BC), 20 months-2 years
• Qur'an: at least to age 2
• Talmud (536 BC): 18 months to 2 years


Samoans, 1 yr
Australian aborigines, 2-3 yrs
Greenlanders, 3-4 yrs
Hawaiians, 5 yrs
Inuit, 7 yrs
Wickes, *Arch Dis Child* 1953, 28: 151-158


• Average age of weaning
– 2.5-3 years
• Range
– 6 mos-7 years
Sugarman & Kendall-Tackett, 1995, *Clin Pediatrics*, 34, 642-647


• Unsolved breastfeeding problem
• Return to work
• Mom needs to be on meds
• To encourage independence
Less-than-great reasons

- 16 year old African American
- Boyfriend delivered her baby during Hurricane Katrina