



Stress Management for Breast Feeding and Working Mothers

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Framework

- Introduction
 - Obstacles in breast feeding while working
 - Psychological stress and its effects on breastfeeding
- Strategies
 - Some tips
 - Stress management (hands on)
 - Relaxation exercise
 - Progressive muscle relaxation
 - Visualisation

What we know already...

- Mothers milk contains almost everything a baby needs as food and is easily digested.
- On the whole babies who have been breast-fed are found to be healthier than babies fed on substitutes.



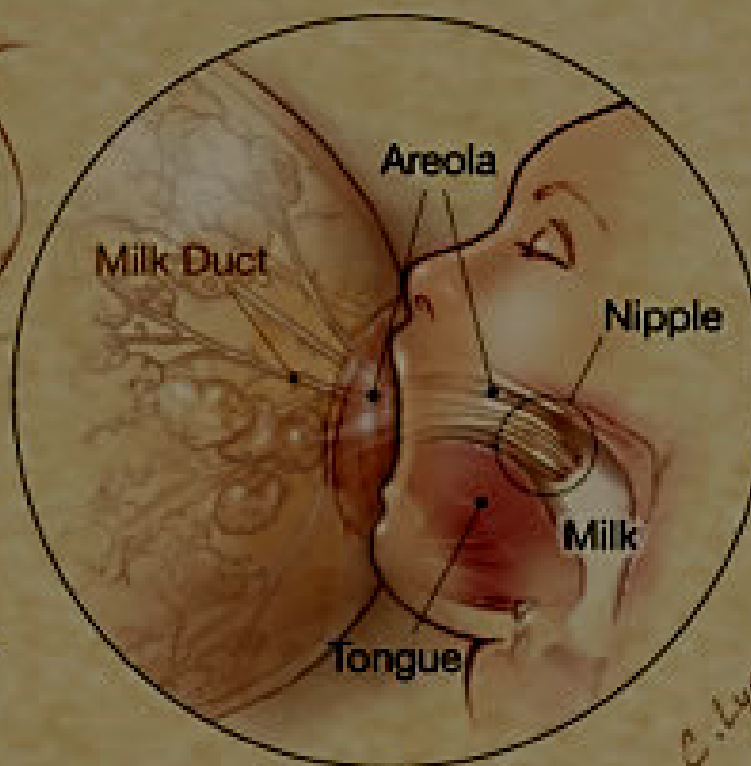
Proper Breastfeeding Position and Latch-On

Hold Your Baby With Her Whole Body Facing Your Body

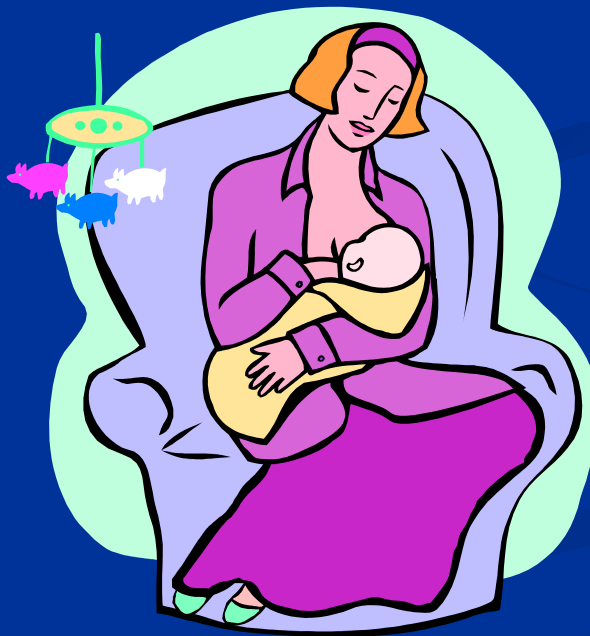
Place Your Baby's Nose and Chin Against Your Breast

Support Your Baby's Head, Neck, and Back

Your Baby Should Draw Both Your Nipple and Areola Into Her Mouth



- A baby enjoys breast-feeding. He feels safe and secure in his mother's arms, and sucking is a pleasant sensation to him.



Obstacles for Working Mothers

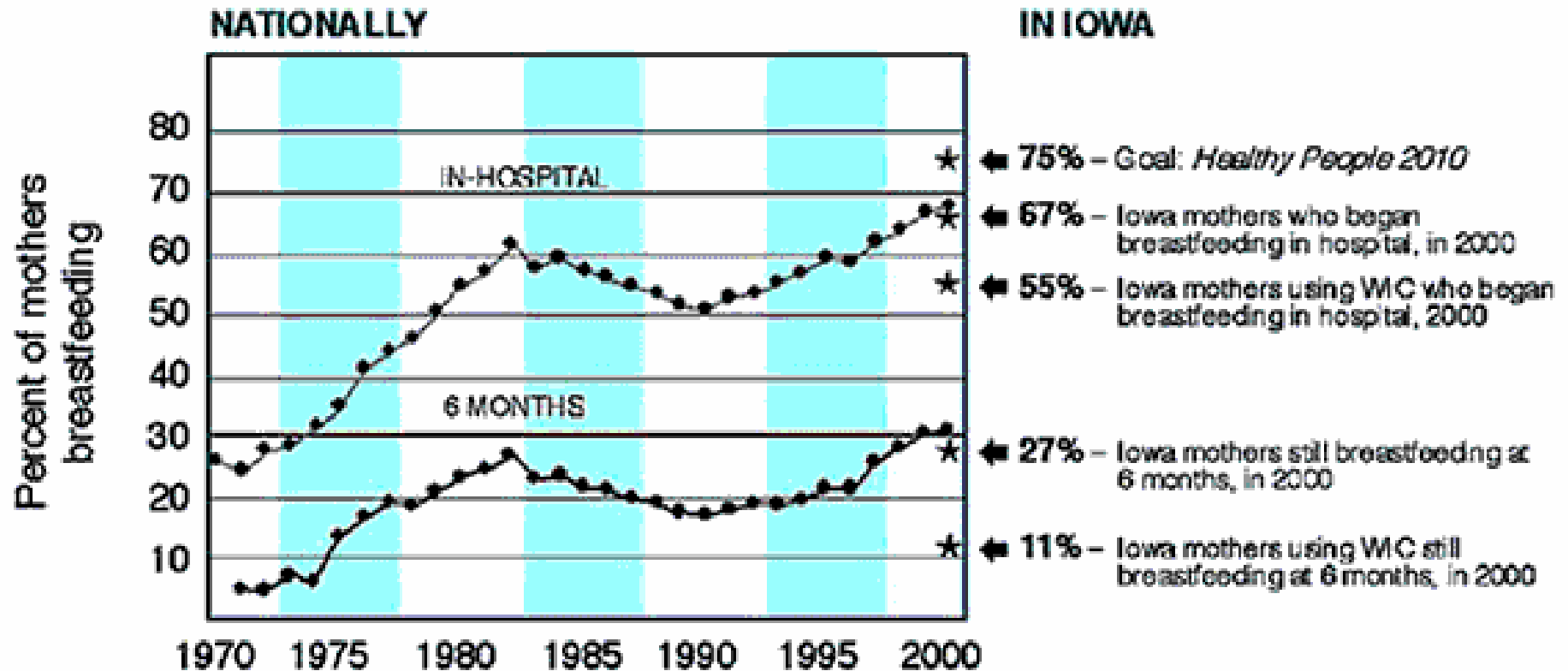
- In the US, currently, **51%** of married women return to the labour force while their children are **under the age of 1 year**, with **67%** of these women working full-time (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2001).
- The decision to return to work may be the result of women's lifestyle change, financial constraints, or professional preparation, but this decision presents a unique challenge for women who desire to continue breastfeeding.
- And of course, the ever “seductive” choice of formulary milk / given by maid / affordable?

- In recent years, new products, increased lactation support services, and publicity about breastfeeding have made it possible for many working mothers to continue breast-feeding after they have returned to work.
- However, despite many women's intentions to breastfeed after returning to work, maternal employment has been reported as a significant problem that influences early weaning

(Chezem, Montgomery, & Fortman, 1997 ; Dodgson & Duckett, 1997 ; Fein & Roe, 1998 ; Zinn, 2000).

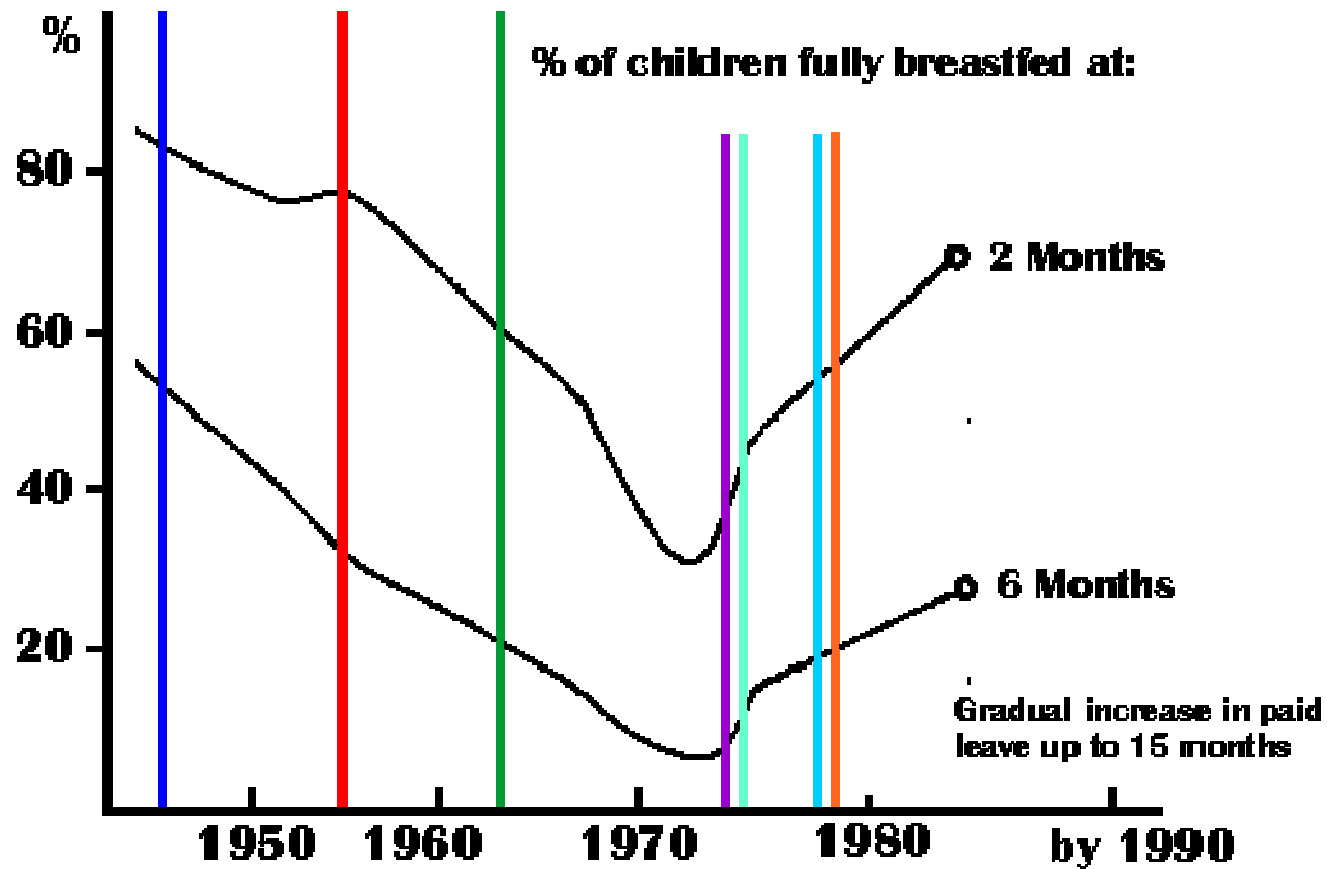
Breastfeeding Trends: 1970 – 2000

Adapted from "Mother's Survey," Ross Products Division, Abbott Laboratories.



The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that women exclusively breastfeed for the first 6 months, and continue at least some breastfeeding for twelve months or as long as the mother desires. So it is discouraging that most women in the United States breastfeed for only six to eight weeks.

Breastfeeding in Sweden



- Illegal to Fire pregnant or newly delivered women
- 6 months leave (3 months paid)
- Increased pay during leave
- Increased pay during leave
- Leave increased to 7 months
- Leave increased to 9 months, 6 months paid
- Leave increased to 18 months

In
Malaysia?



Type of Occupation

- Occupation has been shown to be associated with duration of breastfeeding.
- Women classified as professional, administrative, or managerial have a longer duration of breastfeeding than women in occupations such as clerical and service jobs

(Hills-Bonczyk, Avery, Savik, Potter, & Duckett, 1993; Piper & Parks, 1996).

Identified Barriers

- Identified barriers to breastfeeding in the workplace include:
 - (1) limited access to breast pumps
 - (2) no place available for expressing milk
 - (3) lack of a refrigerator to store breast milk
 - (4) no flexible time to express milk during the work hours
 - (5) longer working hours (>20/week)

(Bar-yam, 1998 ; Cohen & Mrtek, 1994 ; Hills-Bonczyk et al., 1993 ; Thompson & Bell, 1997; Duckett, 1992 ; Ryan et al., 2002).

Categories	Subcategories
I. Support	(a) Accepting environment Boss Coworker Flexible schedule Positive attitude toward breastfeeding
	(b) Spatial issues
	(c) Modeling
	(d) Time allowance
II. Attitude	(a) Commitment
	(b) Determination
	(c) Assertiveness
	(d) Dedication
	(e) Values benefits of breastfeeding
III. Strategic plan	(a) Time management Plan ahead Anticipation/flexible Organize
	(b) Process of maintaining milk supply Expressing milk regularly Building up milk storage Nursing frequently
	(c) Maintain physical health Dietary Fluid intake Rest and relaxation
IV. Psychological distress	(a) Guilt
	(b) Stress
	(c) Feeling overwhelmed, under pressure
	(d) Sacrifice

Categories and Subcategories Expressed by Women Who Combined Breastfeeding and Working (Rojjanasrirat, 2004)

**Breastfeeding and
working women:
thinking strategically**

Knowledge and assistance!!

- One way to assist mothers to breastfeed longer is to learn about ways to accomplish this:
 - knowledge about “lactation management”
 - lactation rooms in the workplace
 - milk storage in day care centers
 - information about breast pumps, breast milk storage systems, and storage requirements

Lactation Management



When to start expressing your breast milk

- Start to practice expressing your breast milk one or two weeks before resuming work. You can do this at any convenient time.
- After feeding, any excess milk can be expressed and stored in a clean container or bottle.
- You can also express and store milk between feeds if you find that your breasts are full or if they are leaking.
- With practice, you will get an idea of how much milk you will have to leave behind.
- It is important for you to express your milk every 3 — 4 hours once you are back to work. The expressed milk should be kept and brought home to be given to your baby on the next day.
- By the end of the two weeks' practice, you may find that you can collect about four bottles of expressed milk with 70 — 90ml of milk per bottle daily.

How to store expressed breast milk

- Immediately after expressing breast milk into a clean container, store it in a refrigerator or ice box. This milk should be used within 24 - 48 hours.
- If no refrigerator or ice box is available, you can store your expressed milk in a cool place for up to 8 hours.
- Never add freshly expressed milk to previously stored milk.

How to use stored breast milk

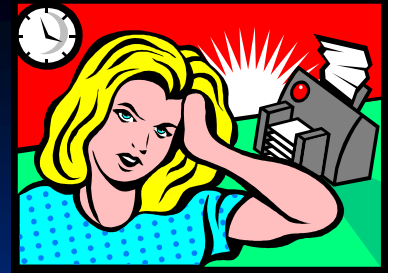
- Before use, let the breast milk return to room temperature. If necessary, place the container with the breast milk in a bowl of warm water.
- Never boil breast milk.
- In case your work takes you away from home for a few days, you can freeze your expressed milk in small quantities. To thaw this milk, hold the container under running water. Then, gradually warm the milk in a bowl of hot water till it reaches room temperature. Never refreeze or refrigerate thawed milk.
- Allow the person who will be looking after your baby to practice feeding your baby your expressed breast milk.

The Bottom Line is..

- I believe that motivation plays a key role in breastfeeding success.
- The more your intrinsic motivation, the more you will fight your way through any tough times.
- This is where stress management plays an important role



Stress and Lactation



- Mental worry must be avoided at all costs.
- Worry may lead to drying up of milk, especially if the mother is worried about her baby not putting on weight.
- Motivation to breast-feeding and avoidance of emotional stress are important for successful breast-feeding.

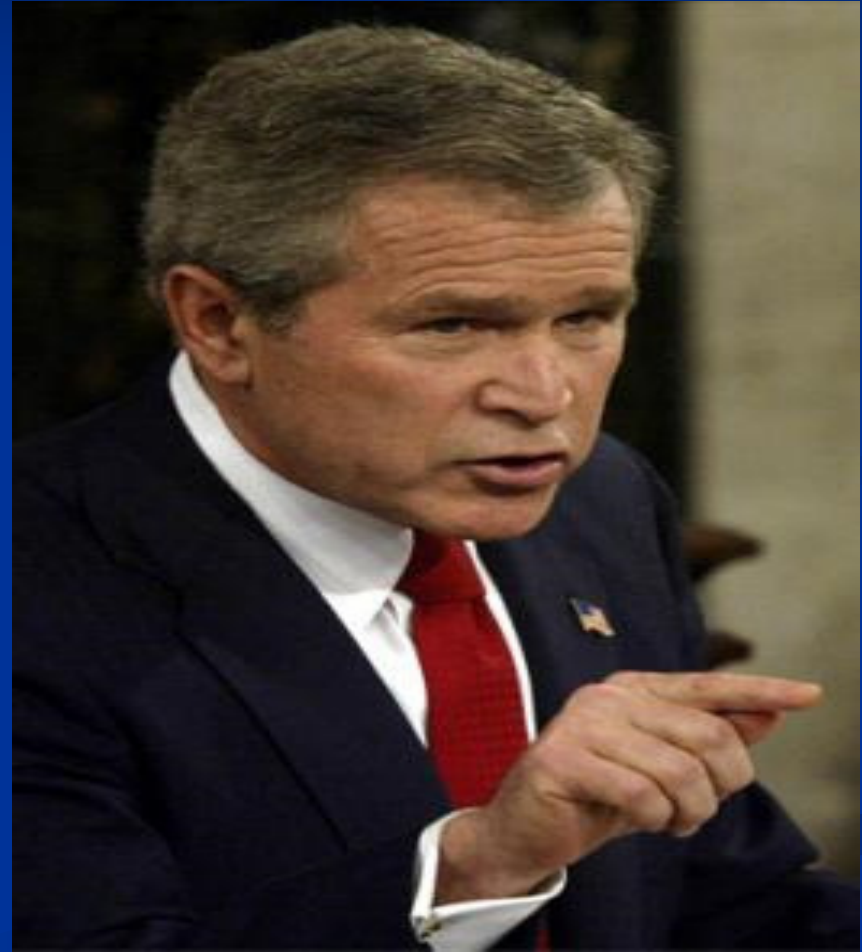




Facts about *Women and Stress*

- During stress, women tend to care for their children and find support from their female friends.
- Women's bodies make chemicals that are believed to promote these responses. One of these chemicals is *oxytocin* (ahk-see-toe-sin), which has a calming effect during stress.
- This is the same chemical released during childbirth and found at higher levels in breastfeeding mothers, who are believed to be calmer and more social than women who don't breastfeed.
- Women also have the hormone estrogen, which boosts the effects of oxytocin.

- Men, however, have high levels of testosterone during stress, which blocks the calming effects of oxytocin and causes hostility, withdrawal, and anger.



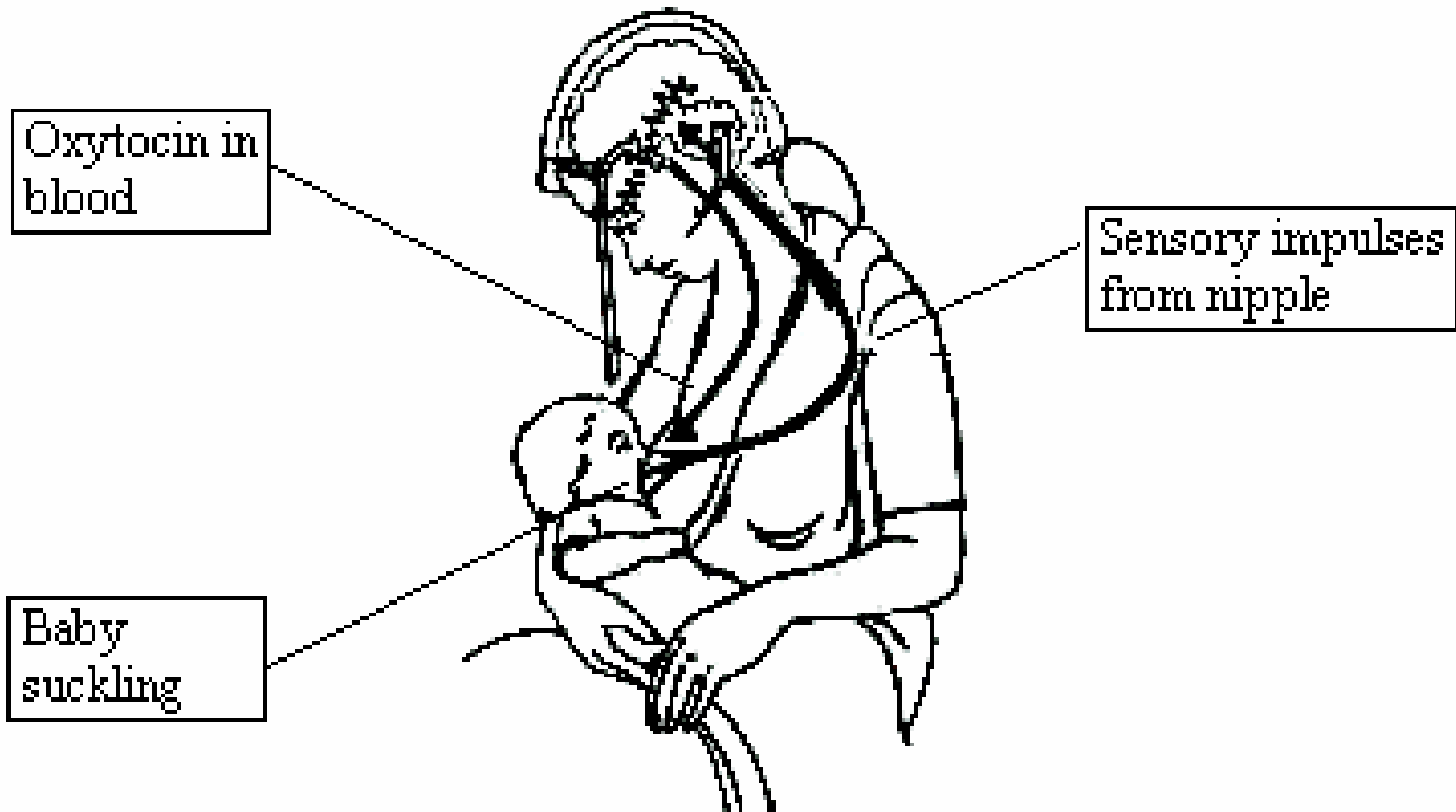


Fig. 5: The oxytocin reflex or the milk flow response

Stimulation of sensory nerves in the nipple by suckling also induces the production of *'oxytocin'* (Fig. 5), which acts on the muscle cells around the alveoli causing the ejection and flow of breast milk to your baby's mouth. These events are the milk flow response, or oxytocin reflex.

Check this out!



- Breastfeeding is associated with reduced perceived stress and negative mood in mothers
- In a research, a total of 55 women were examined, 27 bottle-feeding mothers and 28 breastfeeding mothers.
 - Breastfeeding was associated with a decrease in negative mood and reported significantly less stress.
 - Mood became significantly less positive after bottle-feeding than after breastfeeding.
 - Levels of oxytocin released in the blood during breastfeeding are inversely related to negative moods and emotions.

(Elizabeth Sibolboro Mezzacappa and Edward S. Katkin, Health Psychology 2002-2;21(2):187-93)

Why worry about stress then?

- Experimental studies in breastfeeding women have shown that acute physical and mental stress can impair the milk ejection reflex by reducing the release of oxytocin during a feed.
- If this occurs repeatedly, it could reduce milk production by preventing full emptying of the breast at each feed.
- Prospective observational studies indicate that both maternal and fetal stress during labor and delivery (e.g., urgent Cesarean sections or long duration of labor in vaginal deliveries) are associated with delayed onset of lactation.
- The effects of chronic emotional stress on lactation are not known.

Kathryn G. Dewey The American Society for Nutritional Sciences J.
Nutr. 131:3012S-3015S, November 2001

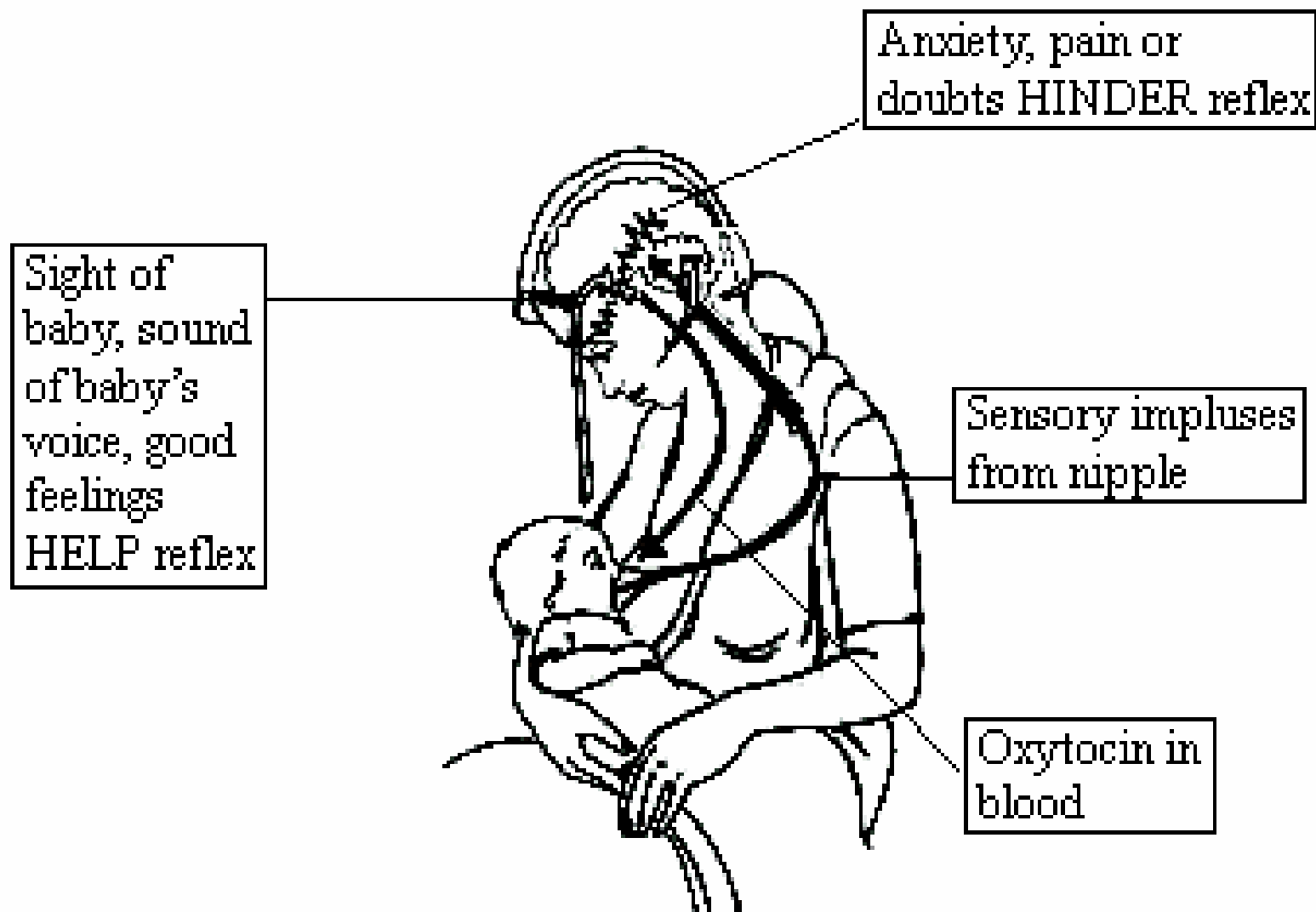


Fig. 6: The milk flow response

Negative feelings like pain, worries, anxiety also inhibit the oxytocin reflex. (Fig. 6)

What are some of the most common causes of stress?

- Stress can arise for a variety of reasons. Stress can be brought about by a traumatic accident, death, or emergency situation. Stress can also be a side effect of a serious illness or disease.
- There is also stress associated with daily life, the workplace, and family responsibilities. It's hard to stay calm and relaxed in our hectic lives.

What are some early signs of stress?

- Stress can take on many different forms, and can contribute to symptoms of illness.
- Common symptoms include headache, sleep disorders, difficulty concentrating, short-temper, upset stomach, job dissatisfaction, low morale, depression, and anxiety.

Effects of stress on our body

- Both short and long-term stress can have effects on your body.
- Research is starting to show the serious effects of stress on our bodies.
- Stress triggers changes in our bodies and makes us more likely to get sick.
- It can also make problems we already have worse.

The many problems related to stress....

- trouble sleeping
- headaches
- constipation
- diarrhea
- irritability
- lack of energy
- lack of concentration
- eating too much or not at all
- anger
- sadness
- higher risk of asthma and arthritis flare-ups
- tension
- stomach cramping
- stomach bloating
- skin problems, like hives
- depression
- anxiety
- weight gain or loss
- heart problems
- high blood pressure
- irritable bowel syndrome
- diabetes
- neck and/or back pain
- less sexual desire
- difficulty getting pregnant

How can I help handle my stress?

- Don't let stress make you sick. Often we aren't even aware of our stress levels.
- Listen to your body, so that you know when stress is affecting your health.
- Strategies:
 - General tips
 - Specific techniques

14 Strategies to Tackle Stress

1. **Relax.** It's important to unwind. Each person has her own way to relax. Some ways include deep breathing, yoga, meditation, and massage therapy. If you can't do these things, take a few minutes to sit, listen to soothing music, or read a book.
2. **Make time for yourself.** It's important to care for yourself. Think of this as an order from your doctor, so you don't feel guilty! No matter how busy you are, you can try to set aside at least 15 minutes each day in your schedule to do something for yourself, like taking a bath, going for a walk, or calling a friend.

14 Strategies to Tackle Stress

- 3. Sleep.** Sleeping is a great way to help both your body and mind. Your stress could get worse if you don't get enough sleep. You also can't fight off sickness as well when you sleep poorly. With enough sleep, you can tackle your problems better and lower your risk for illness. Try to get seven to nine hours of sleep every night.
- 4. Eat right.** Try to fuel up with fruits, vegetables, and proteins. Good sources of protein can be peanut butter, chicken, or tuna salad. Eat whole-grains, such as wheat breads and wheat crackers. Don't be fooled by the jolt you get from caffeine or sugar. Your energy will wear off.

14 Strategies to Tackle Stress

5. **Get moving.** Believe it or not, getting physical activity not only helps relieve your tense muscles, but helps your mood too! Your body makes certain chemicals, called **endorphins**, before and after you work out. They relieve stress and improve your mood.
6. **Talk to friends.** Talk to your friends to help you work through your stress. Friends are good listeners.
 - Finding someone who will let you talk freely about your problems and feelings without judging you does a world of good.
 - It also helps to hear a different point of view. Friends will remind you that you're not alone.

14 Strategies to Tackle Stress

7. **Get help from a professional if you need it.** Talk to a therapist. A therapist can help you work through stress and find better ways to deal with problems. There also are medications that can help ease symptoms of depression and anxiety and help promote sleep.
8. **Compromise.** Sometimes, it's not always worth the stress to argue. Give in once in awhile.

14 Strategies to Tackle Stress

9. **Write down your thoughts.** Have you ever typed an email to a friend about your lousy day and felt better afterward? Why not grab a pen and paper and write down what's going on in your life! Keeping a journal can be a great way to get things off your chest and work through issues. Later, you can go back and read through your journal and see how you've made progress!
10. **Help others.** Helping someone else can help you. Help your neighbor, or volunteer in your community.

14 Strategies to Tackle Stress

11. **Get a hobby.** Find something you enjoy. Make sure to give yourself time to explore your interests.
12. **Set limits.** When it comes to things like work and family, figure out what you can really do. There are only so many hours in the day. Set limits with yourself and others. Don't be afraid to say NO to requests for your time and energy.

14 Strategies to Tackle Stress

13. **Plan your time.** Think ahead about how you're going to spend your time. Write a to-do list. Figure out what's most important to do.
14. **Don't deal with stress in unhealthy ways.** This includes drinking too much alcohol, using drugs, smoking, or overeating.

Stress Management Strategies

- **4 basic strategies:**
 - **Maintain a healthy body:** eat good, enough rest and exercise (RECREATION)
 - **Change the stress inducing situation:** cause of stress (RESOLVE)
 - **Change the thoughts:** perception and thoughts about the stressor (REVISE)
 - **Learn new alternatives:** relaxing responses to replace stressful responses (RELAX)



Recreation, Resolve, Revise, Relax



BASIC 'PROBLEM SOLVING'

■ Steps:

1. **Relax:** single-breath relaxation, say "I am calm"
2. **Define** the problem
3. **Generate** alternative solutions
4. **Evaluate** the alternatives
5. **Implement** the solutions



Specific techniques

- Breathing exercise
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Visualisation

Breathing Exercise



I heard deep breathing could help my stress. How do I do it?

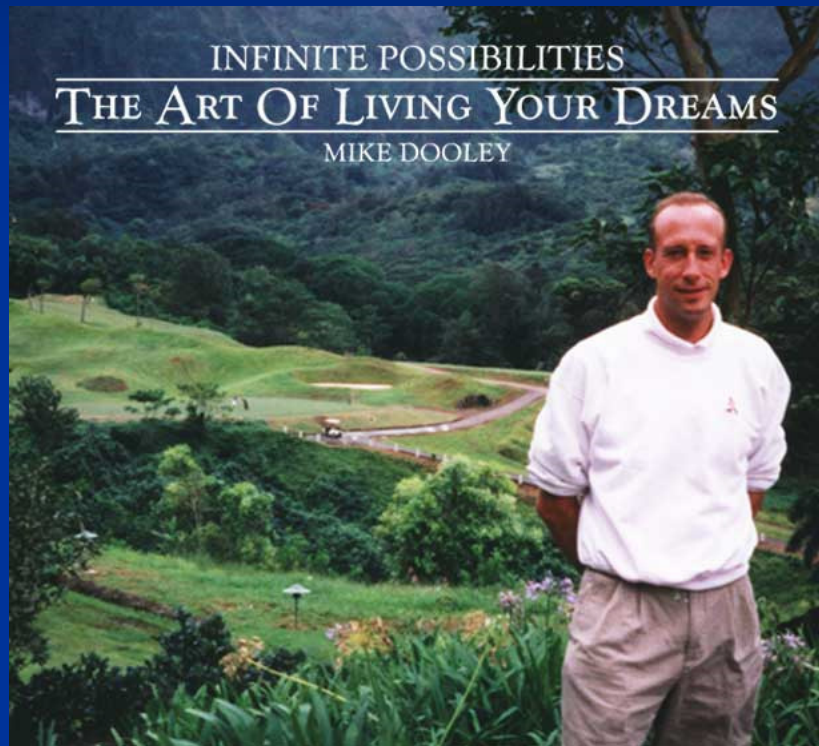
- Deep breathing is a good way to relax. Try it a couple of times every day. Here's how to do it.
- Lie down or sit in a chair.
- Rest your hands on your stomach.
- Slowly count to four and inhale through your nose. Feel your stomach rise. Hold it for a second.
- Slowly count to four while you exhale through your mouth. To control how fast you exhale, purse your lips like you're going to whistle. Your stomach will slowly fall.
- Repeat five to 10 times

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

(Jacobson's)



Visualisation and Affirmation



Visualization Technique

- To begin visualization, sit or lie down in a comfortable position and close your eyes. Scan your body for any muscle tension and relax the areas that need it. Once you feel relaxed, begin to visualize a scene, object, or place that is soothing and pleasing to you. Imagine every aspect of the scene, involving all of your senses.
- For example, if you like to visualize a waterfall on a mountain, imagine first what this looks like: the rushing water, the stream flowing from it, the size and thickness of the trees all around, the sky above and the sun filtering through the branches, and so on. Then imagine how this place would smell—damp and musty or fragrant pine. Next listen for the sounds you would hear if you were there: the water rushing over rocks, the hush of the wind rising and then quieting down, birds singing and crickets chirping. How does the ground feel beneath your feet? Is it rocky and rough, or soft and smooth from pine needles or moss? Imagine chewing on a blade of grass, or taking a long, cool drink from the water-fall. How do these taste?
- As you become more involved in your visual image, your body will relax and you will be able to let go of the problems or worries that you'd felt before. To encourage this relaxation to occur, you can punctuate the images with positive statements, such as "I am letting go of tension" or "I feel calm and relaxed."

Sample Session

- Sit or lie down, close your eyes, and take deep breaths. Scan your body for tension and try to relax those muscles. (long pause) Once your body feels relaxed, go to your favorite place . . . it is calm and safe, a place where your worries disappear. Look around at this place and take in all the sights. How does it feel to be here? You are safe and at peace. Notice what you hear in this special place. What do you smell? Walk a bit farther into your favorite place. Look up, and down, and all around. Notice what you see and how it makes you feel. Say to yourself, "I am relaxed . . . my worries are gone . . . tension has flowed out of my body." Take in all of the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings of this special place. You can return here whenever you want to. Repeat to yourself, "I am relaxed here . . . this is my favorite place."
- When you have thoroughly visualized this place, open your eyes but stay in the same comfortable position. Continue to breathe smoothly and rhythmically, and take a few moments to experience and enjoy your relaxation. Rest assured that your special place is available to you whenever you need to go there₄₈

Finally...

Guidelines for successful breastfeeding for working mothers-

- Before you return to work:
 - Enjoy this special time with your baby.
 - Learn how to express breast milk.
 - Breastfeed the baby frequently and on demand to establish a good milk supply
 - A few days before you return to work, give expressed breastmilk-feed to your baby with a cup or a spoon.

On Joining Work:

■ *You should*

- Breastfeed early in the morning.
- Also, breastfeed just before leaving for work and then again when you come back.
- If your place of work is near your home, come back home to breastfeed during breastfeeding breaks.
- Again breastfeed frequently after you come back in the evening.
- At night breastfeed the child as many times as possible.
- If crèche facilities are available near to place of work then baby can be fed during breastfeeding breaks.
- Express breast milk during work in a clean container for storage to be given to baby later on or discard to relieve heaviness. This will ensure adequate milk production.



**Thank You n'
Wish You
All the Best**

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