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Problems in Breast Feeding

In Maternal Feeding the Difficulties Usually Arise
From the Baby Getting Too Much or Too Little

IN OUR last article we began the subject of breast feeding, pointing out that breast milk was the milk intended for the baby; that it was the best food for baby from several standpoints, and that most mothers, if they had the proper care during the pre-natal period, should be able to nurse their offspring. Experience has proven that the mother's ignorance of the technique of breast feeding is the cause of the greater part of their difficulties along this line. Emphasis was laid on the point that the baby required just so much breast milk to make it grow properly and to keep it happy, sleeping the greater part of the time. In fact, the difficulties experienced in breast feeding may be said to be caused by the baby getting too much food or too little food. One must realize that a baby of a certain weight will require more food than a baby of lesser weight, just as we expect a large gasoline engine to use more gasoline than a smaller one.

It is the failure to realize that weight governs the amount of food necessary which causes the trouble. On this account, the writer pointed out that a balance scale was necessary for intelligent breast-feeding. A series of baby weights and the amount of milk necessary for each weight was also added. Of course, it goes without saying that the physician is the one to guide the mother, but a knowledge of feeding will help you to give intelligent co-operation. The mother who puts her baby first will acquire a knowledge of those things.

Referring to the previous article again, it was pointed out that regularity in feeding, even to the point of wakening the baby, was necessary. The clock

tells the feeding hour and nothing should interfere with it. Babies are fed every three or four hours, depending on the readiness with which they acquire their feedings. A mother with an abundant

supply of milk may nurse every four hours—that is, at 6 a.m., 9 a.m., 2 p.m., 6 p.m., and 10 p.m.

IF THE supply is not so abundant, the three-hour period may be used. Then nurse regularly at 6, 9 and 12 a.m., 3 p.m., 6 p.m., 9 p.m., 12 p.m. Never nurse under three hours. The baby's stomach must have some rest. If baby does not get sufficient nourishment when nursed every three hours, its feeding should be supplemented by a bottle. These points we will now take up.

Insufficient Food

WHAT are the signs of insufficient food? Here we find a baby which starts to nurse ravenously—and continues to do so for a few minutes. Then perhaps it begins to stop and may even go to sleep while at the breast. But long before its proper feeding time, it is awake crying for its food. These babies usually feel cold, for they do not get sufficient food to keep them warm. The baby's bowel movement is small but well-digested. There may be several during the day. Then the most noticeable thing to the mother is that the baby is not gaining in weight. How much should baby grow? Usually the baby grows faster during the first few months of its life than towards the end of the first year. That is to say, the baby usually gains 1½ pounds a month during the first months—gradually

reducing to one pound a month later on. Or one may say that the baby doubles its weight in the first six months and triples its weight by the end of the year. For example, a baby 8 pounds at birth, should be 16 pounds at six months and 24 pounds at twelve months. So that one can always work out in a minute with paper and pencil how much the baby should weigh. Now comes in the advantage also of the scale. By referring to the list given in the previous article, one may see how much the baby should receive for a certain weight (notice we say weight, not age). By weighing the baby before and after feeding, one can tell how much milk the infant is receiving and so tell if it is insufficient.

If, by working out that the baby is not gaining as it should, and is not getting sufficient as shown by the scales, what is to be done? Baby must then nurse from both breasts at each nursing—allowing ten minutes at each breast. This does two things.

First—Increases the milk supply by doubling the source.

Second—Increases the milk supply by stimulating the milk glands, for it is known that the act of suckling becomes a stimulant to the milk glands.

So the baby is fed from each breast at each feeding for ten minutes—and as the supply is not great, one uses the three-hour feeding interval. Without going into detail, it is sufficient to say that the feeding interval should never be less than three hours, even in this case.

IF YOU are having trouble with insufficient food for the baby, take care of yourself to get in the very best condition. Have the proper amount of sleep—getting 9 hours in the 24 hours; get sufficient outdoor, in the sun, exercise, if possible; avoid anything exciting, and eat good wholesome meals, with nourishing fluids taken warm about 20 minutes before nourishing time.

If baby, after a week's trial, still fails to get sufficient milk, one has to consider supplying the extra milk needed by a bottle. It may be that your own milk supply will gradually increase, so that you may be able to omit the bottle feeding later.

How does one supply the extra milk? Take 8 ounces of whole milk (in milk with the cream mixed in by shaking) and 12 ounces of water, mix in a saucepan and boil for five minutes, stirring all the time to keep a scum from forming. Add sufficient boiled water to make up to the original 20 ounces. When about cool, mix in 2 level table-spoonfuls of white sugar. Keep in cool place.

If the baby requires say, 5 ounces breast milk and obtains say, 3 ounces from you by nursing 7 or 8 minutes from each breast, then give 2 ounces of the formula in a bottle (bottle, nipple, etc., all sterilized by boiling). If the baby requires 7 ounces and obtains 4 ounces of breast milk—then supply the 3 lacking by the formula.

Always nurse before giving the bottle, using both breasts. Keep on nursing even if baby only gets a small amount from you for the breast milk is of great value to him. If compelled finally to use an artificial feeding—follow along the lines which will be given later.

Too Much Food
COMMONLY known as dyspepsia. In these cases, the baby grows

(Continued on page 53)

