

NEURODIVERSITY AND BREAST/CHEST FEEDING

**Infant feeding on the spectrum.
By Kate Anderson RN/IBCLC**



WHO AM I?



OUTCOMES FROM PRESENTATION:

Why encouraging breast/chestfeeding is important in the Neurodiverse community.

Barriers to successful human milk feeding.

Strategies to support Neurodiverse parents to meet their infant feeding goals.

Medication use and lactation.

THEY'RE AUTISTIC OR
HAVE ADHD..
SO WHAT?



**Autistic parents experience
life with heightened intensity,
and lactation is no exception.**

**Embrace and include
neurodiverse parents.**

**Celebrate the differences and
discover all the ways we can
support lactating families.**

-Genny Stiller IBCLC
@TheLactationSpectrum

It's just a label. It doesn't really mean much.

I treat everyone the same

They probably won't understand how to breast/chest feed so it'll be easier to bottle feed.

I don't know how to help.

I've heard they are worse when they don't sleep well. Bottle feeding will make them get more sleep.

They are probably on all kinds of medications. It will be safer for the baby if it is formula fed.

IT IS JUST A LABEL. I TREAT EVERYONE THE SAME....

Individualised care matters.

Learn to speak and listen to their language.

If you feel unsure..ask them.

IT WILL BE TOO HARD FOR THEM

It is challenging for everyone.
Regardless of neurodevelopment.

Too hard for them? Or us?

Bottle feeding is HARD WORK.

Lack of sleep

THEY WILL BE BETTER OFF WITH FORMULA

Breast/Chest feeding is associated
with better neurodevelopment.

Reduced risk of Mental illness
parent and baby.

Breast/chest feeding parents
experience better sleep quality.

Enhances the parent-child bond.

THE INVISIBLE LOAD OF ADD/ADHD AND LACTATION



Difficulty
sleeping
when baby
sleeps



Attentive to
everything,
not
inattentive



Feeling
restricted
when sitting
to feed baby



Hard work of
finding
misplaced
things before
baby wakes



Time
blindness
is not
purposeful



Starting or
finishing
tasks is a
challenge



Feelings of
rejection feel
overwhelming
at times



Distracted
thoughts
delay let
down

COMMUNICATION

- ASK what they need.
- May already know more than most..may know more than you!
- May prefer direct instruction.
- Often require you to be specific and simple.
- Use other means of communication: Images, text, video, online support groups.
- May need extra encouragement to attend in-person support groups and utilize phone supports.

It's a bit simplistic because the milk changes more than just fat but it works

It doesn't quite work because the more often you turn the tap on the hotter it becomes... the water has a maximum temperature.

We only have one tap?

“Imagine your breast is a HOT tap. When you first turn on the tap the water is cold...this is the thirst quenching milk at the start of a feed. The more times you use the same tap, the hotter the water becomes demonstrating the fat content increasing”...

A hot tap doesn't get hotter the more often you turn it on though. My Autistic mind jumps straight to literal meaning I'm afraid. Plus I wouldn't want my baby to get burnt with 'hot' milk.

Would be better to give the scientific definition. Give us something to read about it.

SENSORY OVERWHELM/DULLING

- “every day” touch, sound, taste and smell more intense
- May seem as though they are in pain.
- ASK the parent what they do “when things feel to much”
- May prefer no skin to skin.

- Milk dribbling down breasts/skin
- Flickering tongue on nipples
- Fingers touching skin
- Body heat from baby
- Mouth/lips on skin

Dulling: May NOT feel the sensations...

SENSORY CONSCIOUS BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

Instead of this...

"Breast leaking and wetness are normal. It bothers everyone. You just have to get through it."

"You should really just enjoy all the sitting down and relax. Everyone misses these days."

Try this...

"Wet skin feels really uncomfortable. We can't stop the leaking but we can explore options for minimizing the wetness and keeping the skin dry".

"Breastfeeding feels restrictive. Let's explore some options for movement that will help you feel more comfortable when you're feeding your baby."



WHAT MIGHT HELP?

- Side lying while feeding
- Reclined feeding.
- Bouncing/walking
- Soft cloths.
- Nipple shields.
- Expressing.
- Time out.
- Pacifier.
- Timers/clock
- Music.
- Smells.
- Fidget toys.
- Reading.
- Weighted blankets/shrugs
- Acknowledge that is is hard!!

MEDICATIONS IN HUMAN MILK.

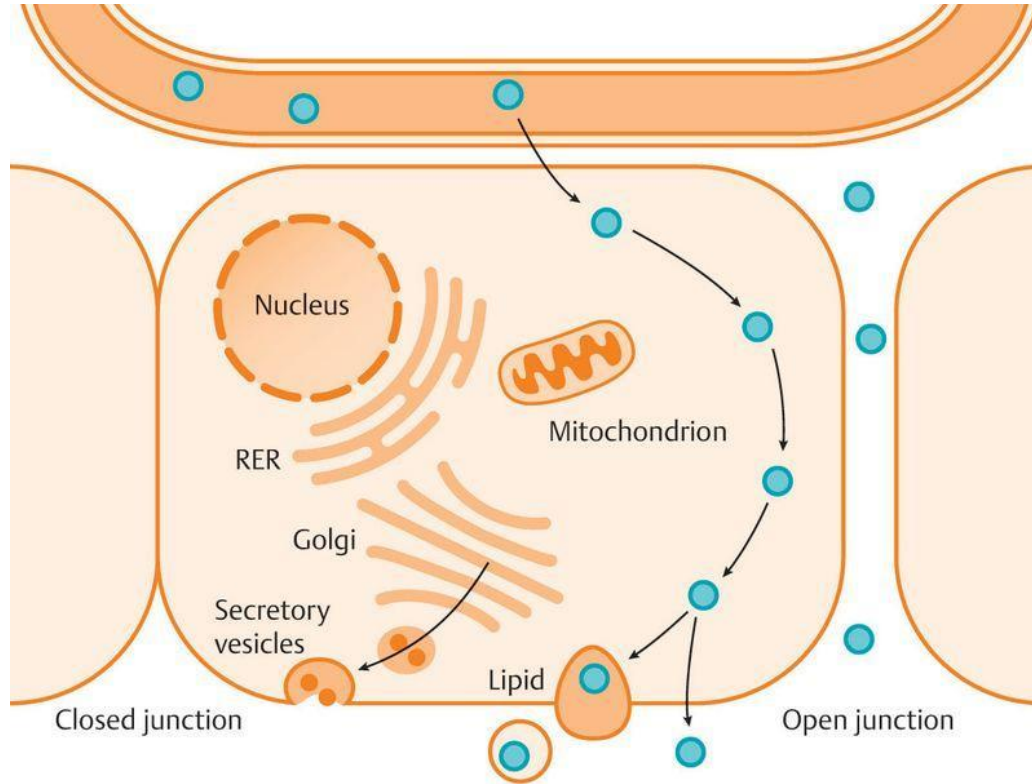
BREAST/CHEST FEEDING BENEFITS OUTWEIGH RISK OF MOST MEDICATIONS.

SOMETIMES MEDICATION THAT ARE UNSAFE IN PREGNANCY ARE **COMPATIBLE** with HUMAN MILK feeding.

GENERALLY SUGGESTED TO KEEP TO SAME PRESCRIPTION.

IF IN DOUBT—ALWAYS SEEK APPROPRIATE ADVICE!

QUICK OVERVIEW OF MEDICATION TRANSFER.



The **bioavailability** of a medication generally refers to the amount of drug that reaches the systemic circulation after administration. Depending on the route of administration (oral, intravenous, intramuscular, subcutaneous or topical), medications must ultimately pass into the systemic circulation prior to reaching their intended site of action or the milk compartment.

<https://www.infantrisk.com/>



Infant Risk Center

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Medication	Relative Infant Dose	Pediatric Concerns	Infant monitoring
Methylphenidate	0.2% to 0.4%	None reported via milk.	Agitation, irritability, poor sleep, changes in feeding, poor weight gain.
Clonidine	0.9% to 7.1%	None reported via milk. May reduce milk production by reducing prolactin secretion.	Drowsiness, lethargy, pallor, dry mouth, poor feeding, constipation, weight gain.

Most SSRI's are safe/compatible.

Sleeping medications/sedatives.

Olanzapine	0.3% - 2.2%	Probably Compatible
Aripiprazole (Abilify)	1%	Suppresses Milk Production
Clozapine	1.33% - 1.4%	Probably Compatible
Quetiapine	0.07% - 0.1%	Probably Compatible
Risperidone	2.8% - 9.1%	Probably Compatible

WHY WE PROMOTE AND SUPPORT BREAST/CHEST FEEDING IN THIS COMMUNITY.

- All the “usual” reasons- Life-long health benefits for parent and baby, community and world benefits of human milk feeding.
- Duration of Breast/Chest feeding influences risk of /severity of developing neurodevelopmental symptoms in the child.
- Autistic individuals and those with ADHD often suffer from low self esteem and supporting them to succeed in something that can grow both themselves as parents and their children is very important.



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**YOU DON'T HAVE TO
UNDERSTAND AUTISM.**

**EVEN PROFESSIONALS DON'T FULLY
UNDERSTAND AUTISM.**

It is **EXCEPTIONALLY** complex.

The only thing you are expected to hold in your awareness,
is the understanding that neurological differences exist
EVERYWHERE.

Be kind. Be patient. Be respectful.



REFERENCES

www.infantrisk.com

www.calmwear.net

TheLactationSpectrum-IG

www.gennystiller.com

<https://tghncollections.pubpub.org/pub/20-breastfeeding-and-the-use-of-medications/release/3#fig-201>

**Thank
you!**



**We
appreciate
you trying
to do
better!**