

Got Milk

PBP: *Promote and support lactation*

Map Phase: Growing Stronger

Source: *Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital*

Contact: Dawn Hawthorne RNC Dhawthorne@mhs.net

The “Got Milk?-Breast milk is Best” program at Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital was initiated in 2002. The purpose of the program was to support the maximum growth potential of the EBLW baby through evidence-based nutritional practices. Data was gathered from ELBW infants that were fed breast milk exclusively for the first month of life. Weekly growth assessments of weight and head circumference from admission to discharge were used to evaluate the practice. Subjects excluded from the study were infants that were given formula at any time during the first month of life and those infants diagnosed with hydrocephalus. After correlation the data reflected indicated the practices used in our “Got Milk” program significantly improved ELBW catch-up weight and most importantly head circumference. Before the program was fully implemented JDCH NBICU collaborated with other NICU participants in Vermont Oxford Network (VON). And research studies conducted by Dr. Paula Meier, RN, DNSc, FAAN Director of Clinical Research and the Lactation Program from the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Rush – Presbyterian St Luke’s Medical Center in Chicago were presented to the multi-disciplinary team at JDCH NICU. This same team collaborated to develop protocols that would be implemented for this practice. Mandatory in-services were provided to nurses, neonatologists and neonatal nurse practitioners (NNPs). Finally, and most importantly, parents played a central role in the implementation of this program. The components of the program included:

- Education of staff and parents regarding the components of breast milk.
- Written guidelines outlining the transporting, storage, and feeding of breast milk to the ELBW baby.
- The significance of “Kangaroo Care”.

A “Mother’s Milk Club was created to offer parents an opportunity to “compare notes” on a weekly basis. The meeting was facilitated and supported by the NICU Family Educator/Lactation Consultant. At this meeting and throughout the implementation process, parents were encouraged to assume control of the fresh milk process.

The end result of this entire practice was evidenced by a dramatic improvement in the discharge weight of the ELBW and most importantly the head circumference. Parents and staff experienced great satisfaction from the fruits of their labor. Parents in particular felt an immense sense of empowerment.

We as clinicians can provide the equipment, but mother's milk is the most important medication.

Growth parameters in ELBW infants (Joe DiMaggio Hospital)

