Choosing a Sitter or Caregiver for Your Breastfed Baby

Whether you choose to have a babysitter for occasional or regular use, or you choose a licensed day care center, it is important that the person caring for your child understands your commitment to breastfeeding. Be sure you interview several people before making your decision. Refer to your handout “Finding a Babysitter or Caregiver for Your Baby.”

In choosing a babysitter, consider the following:

• Does the sitter know about breastfeeding or is he/she willing to learn?
• Does the sitter have children or siblings that have been breastfed?
• Has the sitter worked with breastfeeding couples before?
• Is the sitter supportive in your commitment to continue breastfeeding?
• Is the sitter willing to use expressed breast milk exclusively for feeding your baby?
• Does the sitter know how to store, thaw and warm expressed milk? If not, is he/she willing to learn from you?
• Is the sitter willing to record baby’s activities, including feedings, while you are absent, and be flexible enough to help you carry out your plan? (For example, not feeding the baby within an hour of your arrival time, so that your baby can breastfeed.)
• Will the sitter hold the baby for feedings? (Bottles should not be propped.)
• Is the sitter willing to offer frequent feedings by bottle, cup or dropper to a baby accustomed to breastfeeding?
• Does the sitter know the difference between diarrhea and normal stools of a breastfed baby?

In choosing a day care center, in addition to the above information, you should consider:

• Are you comfortable with the number of babies each person cares for?
• Where does the center store breast milk?
• Do other mothers bring expressed breast milk, and how does the center insure that your baby will receive your milk?
• Will the center accommodate your needs and wishes to breastfeed your infant there?
• Is there a comfortable place to sit and nurse your baby?
• Can you contact the center by phone once or twice a day just to “touch base”?
• Can you drop by at any time without notice?
• If your schedule permits, are they willing to call you or page you when your baby is ready to breastfeed?
• If you are able to come to the center during your lunch break to nurse your baby, will the center allow you to bring your lunch along or even provide you with lunch?

It’s important to know that the person you trust to care for your baby is “breastfeeding friendly” and will support your goals. Be sure you are comfortable with your caregiver’s level of skills, communication and knowledge to make your time away from your baby as easy as possible.
Information for the Childcare Provider

I have chosen to continue to provide my baby with my breast milk while we are apart. As you know, breast milk is the best food for my baby. I am also continuing to nurse my baby when we are together. Please help me by following these guidelines:

• My milk should be stored in the refrigerator.

• To warm the milk, place the bottle in a bowl of warm water or under the faucet. **NEVER boil or heat in a microwave oven.**

• When frozen milk is defrosted, it may be stored in the refrigerator up to 24 hours before it is used.

• Breast milk that is left after a feeding should be thrown out one hour after the baby has finished eating.

• If my baby is hungry and I will be picking him/her up within 30 minutes, please try comfort measures without feeding, or give only ______ounces until I arrive.

Additional instructions: ____________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Telephone number where I can be reached: ___________________________________________

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