

Health & Science

Debunking baby formula myths

Doctor delivers important message



Dr. Lillian M. Beard touches on the value of milk and good nutrition for babies during a visit to Portland

Deciding what to feed a baby is one of the most important decisions a parent will make.

It can also be one of the most confusing and overwhelming decisions.

It has long been agreed that breastmilk is a baby's best source of nutrition as it contains all the necessary nutrients for normal growth and development.

Breastmilk is well tolerated and gentle.

However, some new moms cannot or choose not to breast feed, yet they want nothing but the very best for their baby.

With the many types of infant formula available and some of the myths that surface regarding infant nutrition, parents are often overwhelmed and perplexed.

A couple of the common myths include:

Myth 1: Lactose intolerance is common in babies and should be suspected if a baby turns fussy during feeding and especially if a parent is lactose intolerant.

Truth 1: Although adults may experience lactose intolerance babies are unlikely to suffer from it. Most full term babies are born with the enzyme needed to digest lactose.

It is extremely rare that a baby lacks this enzyme.

In fact, fewer than 50 cases have ever been reported. Should a baby get fussy from feeding it could be that she is having difficulty tolerating the large proteins found in most baby formulas.

"It is important for parents to remember that, for the first few months, the digestive system of a newborn is still immature and delicate. When selecting from the

Good nutrition is so very critical to a baby's life. The message is being delivered by Dr. Lillian Beard during a visit last week to the Portland Observer.

Beard has dedicated her life to the care, health and safety of infants, children and adolescents. She is a practicing pediatrician from Washington, D.C., who is currently on a public service and promotional campaign across the country, sponsored by Carnation.

The greatest opportunity for development occurs during the first 12 months of life, she said.

For example, development of intellect occurs during this period, as the brain doubles in size. It is widely recognized that a good start for babies begins with the nutrition obtained from milk.

Beard says the milk from a baby's mother is the most important food for a newborn.

Carnation makes its products come as close as it can to the nutritional quali-

ties of the milk mother nature intended, she explained.

Beard says Carnation wants to help in the health of newborns and can offer a very important and nutritional substitute when it is needed.

As part of the public service campaign, Carnation is launching a website on the internet for parents. "CarnationBaby.com" provides comprehensive information to help alleviate fears and support couples as they proceed down the road of parenting, Beard said. The site will be available starting in August.

"Pregnancy and the arrival of a new baby in a family are truly an exciting and special time, however many parents feel unsure about the many different aspects of pregnancy and caring for a new child," Beard said.

The Carnation baby website is another vehicle for parents to find the information they want and need as they prepare for and start caring for a baby and will help ease their worries.

all the necessary nutrients for their baby's healthy development," Beard says.

Infant formulas patterned after breast milk. It is the only routine starter formula with the protein specially broken down into smaller pieces. This special process is designed to help reduce the chance for common feeding problems associated with large proteins to make babies and parents much happier.

Myth 2: Iron fortified formula can cause fussiness in general and constipation particular in babies.

Truth 2: There have been no clinical studies that indicate that iron causes fussiness or constipation in babies. In fact, there is a lack of adverse reactions to iron fortified formula.

In reality, iron is an essential nutrient in a baby's diet. It is critical that infants receive adequate amounts of iron, especially in the first 12 months. It is a development stage that cannot be recaptured.

Studies have shown that iron is crucial to the mental and motor development of children. The American Academy of pediatrics states that the "only acceptable alternative to breast milk is iron-fortified infant formula."

Nurses must deal with assisted suicide issue

Death and dying controversy affects professionals beyond the physician

The ethical and professional concerns of nurses dealing with assisted suicide will be the focus of a major panel discussion at the 23rd Biennial Convention of the National League for Nursing at the Oregon Convention Center June 11.

Oregon is the only state permitting physician assisted suicide for the terminally ill. It was established through the death With Dignity Act, passed by public referendum in 1994.

Legal challenges have delayed implementation of the statute and assisted suicide remains a highly controversial issue in the state.

The Supreme Court is expected to issue rulings on assisted suicide laws in two states in early June, generating interest in the panel discussion.

"The session is part of the League's efforts to continue to raise the salient issues of assisted suicide as they affect health care professionals beyond the physician," says Dr. Sheila Ryan, President of the NLN.

Associate Dean Jane Kirschling of the School of Nursing at the University of Rochester will moderate the panel. Dr. Kirschling, a Professor of Nursing at the Oregon Health Sciences University in Portland from 1984 to 1996, served as a member of an Oregon Health Decisions and Oregon Hospice Association Committee on assisted suicide in 1993-94.

She also sat on the Oregon Medical association's end of Life Task

Force, created in 1994 to recommend ways for the health care community to respond to the implementation of assisted suicide.

Beginning at 11 AM, the session consists of presentations on three separate aspects of assisted suicide and an open discussion of the subject. Panelists will include Dr. Barbara A. May, an Associate Professor at the Linfield College School of Nursing in Portland.

Dr. May examines the NLN's recently issued white paper on assisted suicide, titled "Life-Terminating Choices: A Framework for Nursing Decision Making," she served on a task force that produced the study.

Dr. Bonnie Reagan, a Portland physician who is also a Registered Nurse, speaks on assisted suicide issues of concern to doctors. Kelly T. Hagan, Esq., an attorney with Cooney & Crew of Portland, addresses legal and legislative battles over the state's Death With Dignity Act and the status of the Supreme Court's consideration of assisted suicide laws.

None of the panelists have taken strong positions for or against assisted suicide.

The session is one of the featured programs at the five-day NLN Convention, which runs from June 7 to 11.

Other highlights include demonstration on health care technology by digital Equipment corporation and presentation of a special award to Mariah Taylor, a former welfare recipient who founded the North Portland Nurse Practitioners Community Health Clinic, known as "The Clinic of Last Resort."



James L. Phillips, M.D. Baylor College of Medicine Houston, Texas

Enjoying the Good, Old Summertime

frolic and a frenzy of outdoor activities for children and adolescents. As school ends, it's time to remind children, and ourselves, about summertime hazards.

As a pediatrician at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, I see an increase in accidents involving

young people during the summer. The start of vacation is a good time for parents to take a few precautions and to go over safety rules with children.

Visit neighborhood pools that are likely to be used by your children. Find out if there is supervision at the

pool and how the lifeguards are trained. Also, consider enrolling your children in swimming lessons if they don't know how to swim or are not strong swimmers.

Children between the ages of 1 and 5 are the most common victims of drowning.

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