8 NEWBORN FEEDING

8.1 BREASTFEEDING

8.1.11 Feeding according to need

BFHI Step 8 - Encourage Breastfeeding on Demand

Key Points

1. No restrictions should be placed on the frequency or length of a baby’s breastfeeding if the baby is healthy and born at term and feeding effectively.

2. Mothers should be advised to feed their baby whenever the baby is hungry or as often as the baby shows readiness to feed. There should be no limit on the maximum number of feeds taken. A well newborn often has an average of 8-12 feeds in a 24 hour period.

3. Factors such as mothers milk supply must be considered when assessing the frequency of feeds.

4. Most women need to offer both breasts at each feeding. Alternating the starting side.

5. Long periods without sucking stimulation are not advisable when establishing breastfeeding as the sucking stimulates the release of prolactin from the anterior pituitary gland.

6. If the infant sleeps for long periods in the first week of life without feeding, factors such as the infants gestation, weight, state of hydration and urinary output will need to be assessed by an experienced midwife.

7. If an infant does not show interest in suckling during the first few hours after birth, maintain skin to skin contact and commence expressing colostrum to give to the baby.

8. Give the mother a written plan of management for her to follow.