

UNICEF UK BABY FRIENDLY INITIATIVE

GUIDANCE FOR VIRTUAL INFANT FEEDING SUPPORT DURING THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) OUTBREAK



GUIDANCE SHEET 2: ANTENATAL CONVERSATIONS

Delivering Baby Friendly services at this time can be difficult. However, babies, their mothers and families deserve the very best care we can provide. This document on antenatal conversations is part of a series of guidance sheets designed to help you provide care remotely.

PREPARING FOR THE CONVERSATION

- Plan a mutually agreed appointment with the mother and consider her history/circumstances prior to consultation if possible
- Refer to [Guidance Sheet 1](#) before you start
- Be aware that parents may be feeling vulnerable and frightened because of Covid-19, so sensitivity and active listening are important.

USEFUL RESOURCES

- [Antenatal signature sheet](#)
- [Happy Baby leaflet](#)
- [Baby Friendly support for parents webpage](#)

DURING THE CALL

- Introduce yourself and confirm consent with the mother to continue the call
- Let the mother know how much time you have
- Explore and accept what the mother already knows, then ask permission to offer additional support
- Encourage parents to take time to [connect with their baby](#) as this will help them to develop a relationship with their baby and help them feel calm at this difficult time
- Share with parents that talking to their baby and noticing and responding to movements can help [baby's brain development](#)
- Explain the role [breastfeeding](#)/breastmilk plays – [particularly at this time](#) – in protecting the baby against infectious diseases and developing the baby's immune system
- Remind parents of the value of breastfeeding as a source of comfort and food
- Help get breastfeeding off to a good start by reviewing the benefits of unhurried [skin-to-skin contact](#) for all mothers, irrespective of feeding method
- Let mother know how to recognise early feeding cues (mouth opening, turning head, seeking and rooting, licking and nuzzling)
- Introduce [positioning](#) and [attachment](#) and where to find information online
- Introduce [sleep](#) and how to [care for baby at night](#)
- Introduce antenatal [hand expression](#), e.g. if mother is diabetic.

CLOSING THE CONVERSATION

- Ask the mother how she feels and if there is anything else she would like to know about
- Inform the mother of next steps, e.g. follow up call or referral
- Complete required record keeping of the conversation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Breastfeeding/breastmilk is important for baby's immune system; there is no evidence at this time that Covid-19 can be passed through breastmilk
- Continue to follow [practical guidance](#) to prevent Covid-19, including handwashing and social distancing as appropriate
- Allow the mother to talk with some prompting from you, but avoid expressing opinion or contradicting what she is saying
- Reflect what the mother is saying to show you are listening
- Keep information succinct and don't overload; use links to re-enforce key messages
- Don't expect a commitment straight away. Provide links to additional information.