



BREASTFEEDING TECHNIQUES AND SUPPORT: THE ROLE OF NURSES

Breastfeeding is a natural and vital part of early infant care. It is recommended as it offers optimal nutrition, immune protection and emotional bonding for both mother and baby. However, for many new mothers, breastfeeding does not come easily or naturally. Proper techniques, reassurance and ongoing support are essential. This is where nurses can play a crucial role.

One of the primary responsibilities of nurses is to educate mothers about correct breastfeeding techniques. They can help mothers achieve a proper latch, which is key to effective feeding and preventing nipple pain. Nurses can demonstrate different breastfeeding positions such as the cradle hold, cross-cradle hold, football hold and side-lying position. This allows mothers to figure out what is most comfortable for them and their baby. They also guide mothers on how to recognise hunger cues, ensuring timely feeding and establishing a healthy feeding routine.

Providing hands-on support, especially during the early postnatal period, is another area where nurses are invaluable. They can observe feeding sessions, offer gentle corrections and encourage mothers who may feel anxious or overwhelmed. For mothers recovering from caesarean sections or experiencing physical discomfort, nurses suggest supportive positions and pain-relief strategies to make breastfeeding easier and more comfortable.

Another critical aspect of the nurse's role is identifying and managing common breastfeeding challenges. Issues such as engorgement, sore or cracked nipples, low milk supply or concerns about the baby's weight gain can discourage mothers from continuing to breastfeed. Nurses can provide practical solutions and refer mothers to lactation



consultants or doctors when needed. Early intervention often prevents minor issues from snowballing.

The role of nurses in providing emotional support is equally important. New mothers may experience self-doubt, fatigue or stress, which can affect breastfeeding success. Nurses can offer encouragement, listen to concerns without judgement and help build a mother's confidence in her ability to nourish her baby. They also educate family members, promoting a supportive environment at home.

This apart, nurses play a vital role in community and follow-up care. Through postnatal visits, clinics and helplines, they ensure continuity of breastfeeding support and reinforce correct practices.

To put it in brief, nurses are key advocates for successful breastfeeding. Through education, practical guidance, early problem-solving and compassionate support, they empower mothers to breastfeed with confidence.