

## **Glossary of Terms**

**Alveoli:** glands in the breast where milk is produced and stored.

**Areola:** dark, circular area surrounding the nipple that helps attract the baby to the breast.

**Breast Massage:** hand massage of the breast used to facilitate letdown and expression of milk. Radial massage means massaging systematically along each radius of breast tissue.

**Breast compression:** applying pressure to the breast tissue to increase the flow rate when the baby's swallowing rate slows. This technique is used to assist the baby to obtain more milk and to help drain the breast more fully.

**Colostrum:** thick, clear or yellow fluid secreted from breast during pregnancy and in the first few days postpartum before the onset of mature breast milk. It provides nutrients and because it is extremely high in antibodies and leukocytes, it protects the baby from infection. Colostrum is produced in small amounts, but it is concentrated nutrition and easily digested, so it is sufficient for the baby. Colostrum seals the newborn's gastrointestinal tract with a barrier that prevents proteins from penetrating and possibly sensitising a baby to foods the mother has eaten.

**Duct System:** system of tubes through which milk flows from the point of production out to the nipple pores.

**Expression:** extracting milk from the breasts, either by hand or by using a breast pump.

**Exclusive breastfeeding:** the infant receives only breast milk from the mother, or expressed breast milk, and no other liquids or solids with the exception of drops or syrups consisting of vitamins, mineral supplements, or medicines.

**Galactagogue:** medication or herb used to assist in augmentation of a mother's milk supply. Most common include domperidone, fenugreek, and Blessed Thistle.

**Gravidity and Parity:** gravidity is the number of times that a woman has been pregnant, and parity is defined as the number of times that she has given birth to a foetus with a gestational age of 24 weeks or more, regardless of whether the child was born alive or was stillborn. Gravida 2 para 1 means two pregnancies and one live birth.

**Growth Spurt:** period of sudden growth when the baby nurses more frequently than usual and thus increases mother's milk supply. Common at 10 days, three weeks, six-to-eight weeks, three months, and six months.

**International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC):** health professional who provides assistance in all breastfeeding problems, including the most challenging ones. An IBCLC has international qualification that ensures a consistent standard throughout the world. To become an IBCLC, the person has to pass an exam set forth by the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners ([www.iblce.org](http://www.iblce.org)). An IBCLC can be found online at the International Lactation Consultant Association ([www.ilca.org](http://www.ilca.org)).

**Lactogenesis 1:** initiation of milk synthesis which starts mid-pregnancy and continues until on average 2 days post-partum. Alveolar cells are differentiated from secretory cells and prolactin stimulates the secretory cells to produce colostrum.

**Lactogenesis 2:** occurs between the third and eighth day post-partum and is triggered by a drop in maternal progesterone resulting in onset of copious milk production . Control of milk production switches from endocrine (hormonal) to autocrine (removal and replacement).

**Latching On:** when the baby takes the nipple and areola properly into the mouth to begin nursing. In a good latch, baby takes in not only the nipple but a good part of the areola. Baby's lower jaw should be 2-4 cm from the nipple since the lower jaw milks the breast. Incorrect latch is the main reason mothers get sore nipples.

**La Leche League (LLL):** organisation with the sole purpose of helping breastfeeding mothers. La Leche League leaders hold group meetings for breastfeeding moms in all parts of the world. The organisation is internationally recognised for expertise in breastfeeding. The mission of La Leche League International is to help mothers worldwide to breastfeed through mother-to-mother support, encouragement, information, and education, and to promote a better understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in the healthy development of the baby and mother.

**Low milk supply:** situation when the mother does not produce enough milk to meet the needs of her baby. Low milk supply is determined by the baby not gaining well on breast milk alone - not by how often the baby feeds. There are many reasons for low milk supply, many of which can be corrected. One can increase milk supply by stimulating the breasts/nipples with more frequent nursing, with pumping, or with " switch nursing", where the mom switches the baby between breasts several times during feeding. Galactagogues can also be used.

**Manipulated latch:** when the mother retracts the nipple away from its position exactly opposite infant's mouth until lower lip is positioned 2-4 cm below base of nipple. Then she allows nipple to return to original position and be folded into baby's mouth allowing a full mouthful of breast tissue.

**Mastitis:** inflammation of the breast that can be caused by obstruction, infection and/or allergy. Symptoms of mastitis are a hard lump or area of engorgement in the breast that can feel tender, hot, swollen or look reddened. The mother also has headache, chills, fever, and general aching. Mastitis often requires antibiotics. If improperly treated, it can lead to breast abscess. Breastfeeding should be continued. Draining the ducts of milk is crucial. A significant lowering of milk supply usually results from inability to clear milk from breast.

**Milk Ejection Reflex:** conditioned reflex ejecting milk from the alveoli through the ducts towards the nipples. Also known as let-down reflex. Let-down occurs when the sucking action of the baby sends a message to the brain, stimulating the hypothalamus gland, which in turn stimulates the pituitary gland to release the hormone oxytocin. Oxytocin causes the muscles surrounding the alveoli to contract and squeeze the milk out to the ducts. Some mothers feel let-down as a tingling sensation within the breast, and some don't feel anything. If the baby is getting the milk, then let-down did take place. A strong let-down can cause leaking of milk from the breasts.

**Milk Supply:** the quantity of milk a woman produces, usually compared to the baby's requirements for milk.

**Nipple:** the protruding part of the breast which extends and becomes firmer upon stimulation.

**Nipple, blanched:** temporary whitening of the nipple usually caused by short jaw excursions, improper positioning, or an unusual suck causing trauma to the nipple. This results in vasoconstriction which causes anoxia of the tissue and pain.

**Nipple Pore:** outside opening through which breastmilk flows. Women have an average of four to nine pores per nipple.

**Non-nutritive suckling:** when a baby suckles at breast with gentle, rapid jaw motion to comfort, or to elicit an additional milk ejection reflex. Only small amounts of milk are removed during this suckling.

**Obstructed or Plugged Duct:** blockage in a milk duct caused by accumulated milk or cast-off cells.

**Oxytocin:** hormone produced by the pituitary gland that contracts the muscle cells around the alveoli and causes milk to flow forward to the nipple. The pituitary gland makes oxytocin when the nipple is stimulated. Oxytocin is also produced in the human body in response to loving touch, during sexual intercourse, and during labour contractions.

**Positioning:** way baby is held or situated when breastfeeding. The most common breastfeeding positions with newborns are cradle hold, football hold, cross-cradle hold, and side-lying.

**Prolactin:** hormone produced by the pituitary gland responsible for milk production within the alveoli in the breast. During pregnancy, prolactin makes the breast tissue grow. After birth, it stimulates milk production. Prolactin is made in response to nipple stimulation, when the baby suckles at the breast. Low prolactin levels can affect the mother's milk supply, in which case prescription drugs are often used.

**Pumping:** extracting milk from breasts with the help of an external pump. There are both manual and electrical breast pumps, and several different brands. Pumping enables mothers to store their milk so that a caregiver can then give it to the baby while the mother is away (for example working). Pumping is also used if the mother has a low milk supply, to induce lactation, or to relieve engorgement. Many moms with pre-term babies pump their milk when the baby is too immature to feed at breast.

**Purelan or Lansinoh:** brand names for ultra pure medical grade USP Modified Lanolin.

**Relactation:** process by which a woman who has given birth but did not initially breastfeed is stimulated to lactate, or to resume lactation after discontinuing. Relactation occurs by stimulating the breasts with a breast pump and/or baby.

**Rooting Reflex:** instinct of the newborn to turn his head when touched on the face toward the source of stimulation, and to gape mouth widely.

**Suckling:** the process of an infant breastfeeding, including sucking, compression of areola with jaws, seal with lips, and tongue massaging milk out of the ducts underlying the areola.

**World Breastfeeding Week:** celebrated internationally August 1-7 each year. In Canada Breastfeeding Week is celebrated in the 40<sup>th</sup> week of the year which occurs the 1<sup>st</sup> week in October.