



Letter to Editor

Diabetic Mother and Breastfeeding

Hamide Zengin¹, Nursan Cinar²

¹Assistant Prof., Bilecik Seyh Edebali University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Pediatric Nursing, Bilecik, Turkey., ²Professor, Sakarya University Faculty of Health Science, Department of Pediatric Nursing, Turkey.

Dear Editor,

The World Health Organization reports that breastfeeding should be started within the first hour after birth, a baby should be exclusively breastfed within the first 6 months, and then breastfeeding should be continued up to 24 months and more by giving necessary supplementary foods¹, and diabetic mothers are advised to breastfeed their baby for at least four months.²

Hypoglycemia develops in nearly half of the babies of mothers with DM, and the risk of hypoglycemia should be reduced in newborns by keeping them warm because hypothermia and hypoglycemia are closely associated with each other. The best practice is to ensure that the baby sucks his/her mother during the first hours after birth. Mastitis and candidiasis are more frequent especially in mothers with DM whose diabetes cannot be controlled well. Since this situation may lead to the interruption of breastfeeding.

It has been determined that the babies of mothers with Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM) and Type 1 DM suck less often, have shorter complete or partial breastfeeding durations start formula earlier, and use the suction pump more compared to the babies of healthy mothers.³

In a study in which the breastfeeding status of

mothers with Type 2 DM and mothers with Type 1 DM was compared, it was shown that the breastfeeding durations of mothers with Type 2 DM were lower compared to mothers with Type 1 DM. In the same study, it was emphasized that the high Body Mass Index and smoking also had an effect on this situation.⁴ Like all breastfeeding mothers, mothers with DM should not smoke as well.

The fact that a diabetic mother uses an antidiabetic medication affects the success of breastfeeding. Metformin and glyburide are transferred from mother to baby, and their use during lactation is contraindicated. Insulin treatment can be received during breastfeeding; however, the mother should take supplementary carbohydrate before breastfeeding.⁵

Mothers with DM and individuals who give them social support should be told that DM is not contraindicated for breastfeeding. The mother should have snacks/main meal before breastfeeding so that her blood glucose will not drop (in particular, while breastfeeding the baby alone at night). Since the duration of breastfeeding can be extended, the mother should not breastfeed her baby at the moment of hypoglycemia, and it is necessary to receive support regarding the issue from a nurse, midwife or doctor.

References:

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