

Improving Breastfeeding Rates Through the Implementation of Nursing Algorithms

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INTRODUCTION

- Complications resulting from maternal and infant risk factors can necessitate feeding interventions.
- Inconsistency in information provided to patients can result in the use of interventions that do not support their goal of Exclusive Breastfeeding.
- The purpose of this initiative was to develop a consolidated, single document featuring evidence-based practices to guide the clinical practice of bedside nurses when providing lactation support.

METHODS

- Compilation of evidence-based practices to create an algorithm-type flowsheet with the aim of providing consistent guidelines for lactation support.
- Reviewed by multiple practice councils.
- Utilized during standardized handoff reports for each Well Full-Term baby on a 30-bed maternity unit.

RESULTS

- Increased Exclusive Breastfeeding rates seen directly after implementation of the Exclusive Breastfeeding flowsheet.
- Flowsheet has since been adapted to be used by both bedside nursing and patients as a guide through the Exclusive Breastfeeding pathway while addressing various complications that may arise.

Implementation of a breastfeeding flowsheet may increase exclusive breastfeeding rates among well babies and their mothers.



“Increasing breastfeeding rates is one of the most important behaviors that we can promote to decrease infant death and illness worldwide.”

-The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, 2019



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

1. Focus on breastfeeding guidelines and policies within your hospital system.
2. Create a consolidated flowsheet featuring lactation guidelines for bedside nursing.
3. Initiate orientation to flowsheet and provide training on use.
4. Utilize flowsheet during standardized handoffs.
5. Empower staff to use flowsheet to reinforce policies and guidelines.
6. Continuing education in the form of Lactation in-services to support continued use of flowsheet.

DISCUSSION

- Accepted as an enterprise-wide standard in clinical breastfeeding practice across 33 hospitals in the Intermountain region to help standardize lactation support.
- A version supporting the Well Late Preterm infant is currently in the approval process.

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