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Breast Is Best

By Lendon H. Smith, MD

Why would chiropractors want to read about breast-feeding? Chiropractors deal with muscle and bone; soft tissues, such as breasts, are just things to fill the empty spaces around the body and to add interest. Stay with me and see if this makes some sense.

I have recently learned that we pediatricians have been responsible for a four-decade decline of breast-feeding. Did you know that in 1900, 90 plus percent of babies were breast fed? It fell somewhat in the flapper 20's and then plummeted after WWII, after I got into practice, to about 30 percent of babies. (Fortunately, in 1980 it is back up to 60 percent of babies now getting breast milk for at least a few months.)

We were taught in medical school -- where they knew everything -- that "science" had figured out an equally good modified cow's milk to feed human babies. It had more protein and was equal in all ways to human breast milk, was sterile, and the amount could be measured when delivered to the baby via the bottle. Some smart-aleck said that if women's breasts had been provided with flow-meters, there would have been no problem about encouraging nursing; we could always be sure the little suckers were getting enough.

Our only recourse in those days was to weigh the baby before and after. It was not enough to ask the mother, "Are you doing okay?" They had to be getting 2 ounces per pound, per 24 hours or off the breast and onto the bottle. What did our ancestors do two-million years ago? They nursed their babies or used a wet nurse. I am convinced that we have been foolish to allow babies to drink cow's milk.

Dr. Frank Oski, the chief of Pediatrics at Johns Hopkins Medical School, said that if a doctor tells a woman to feed her baby cow's milk, that mother should be made to sign a consent form stating that she understands she is about to embark on the most extensive, uncontrolled human experiment in existence.

We wimpy pediatricians allowed the milk companies to move into the newborn nursery and sabotage breast feeding. "Here's a little formula so the baby won't be so hungry, dearie," they said to the exhausted,

vulnerable, new mother who welcomed the rest. Well, that pretty much stopped her flow.

Since then, every few years "science" has found something wrong with cow's milk as a substitute:

1. Anemia: Only a calf can absorb the iron from cow's milk.
2. Convulsions: One of the companies boiled the B6 out of the milk.
3. Another type of anemia due to folic acid deficiency. They forgot to add it when they sterilized the milk.
4. Dry skin and eczema from the lack of essential fatty acids. They did not think it was important enough to add.
5. Repeated ear infections due to the extra phlegm that the cow's milk produced in the allergic ones. It plugs up their eustachian tubes; the bacteria love to grow in this mucus.
6. A higher incidence of infections in general. Diarrhea is more common in the bottle-fed.
7. If babies are breast-fed for six to twelve months, they have a higher intelligence score when they grow up -- in comparison to their bottle-fed peers.

Many of these babies developed crowded teeth -- partly because of the lack of adequate jaw stimulation, but also because cow's milk tends to be somewhat alkaline; hence calcium and magnesium are less available to form the bony structures during those early formative years.

You chiropractors will see the end result of this early deprivation in narrow heads, crowded teeth, malocclusion, and temporomandibular joint syndrome. So the pediatricians inadvertently helped the orthodontists and the chiropractors.

We cannot imitate mother nature; we are to use her equipment whenever possible.

Editor's Note: Dr. Smith offers a fascinating and often hilarious, information-packed monthly newsletter available via subscription for \$8 US, \$10 US (Can), \$14 foreign (other). Just send your check payable to:

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