

Mental health, immune system and breastfeeding

When a person experiences physical or psychological stress their immune system reacts by releasing proinflammatory cytokines. At a normal level this inflammatory response helps protect the body from infection and helps to heal wounds, as well as ripening the cervix for birth.

On-going high levels of stress can overwhelm the body's responses and result in depression. Breastfeeding down-regulates the body's stress responses by lowering levels cortisol, ACTH, epinephrine, and norepinephrine in the mother's system. Disturbed sleep raises the proinflammatory cytokines and increases depression risk after birth. Exclusively breastfeeding mothers get more and better quality sleep, more mother-baby contact and have increased positive mood, which reduce the inflammatory response and thus is protective against depression.

Pain and trauma increases the inflammatory response and the increased response, in turn, increases the pain and the risk of depression. Promptly addressing the pain from birth trauma or sore nipples can halt the stress reaction and lower the risk of depression. Exercise and taking long-chain omega-3 fatty acids may also reduce inflammation and thus the risks of depression.

Thus reducing maternal stressors through antenatal information, supportive birth experiences, and assisting breastfeeding to go well can reduce the body's inflammatory responses and reduce the risks of depression after birth. Want to know more? Read the work of Kathleen Kendell-Tackett highlighted below.

Did you know?

The high rates of breastfeeding among the Irish Catholic immigrants in Montreal in the 1880s increased infant survival rates compared to the cultural groups of French Canadians and Protestants from Britain and Ireland even when living in similar circumstances. <http://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-12-breastfeeding-babies-19th-century-montreal.html>



What's On

Feb 20th Cork, repeated Feb 23rd Dublin
Theme Day: Putting Theory into Practice

Feb 25th & 26th, Galway
IBLCE Exam Prep Intensive Workshop

March - April, Dublin
Training the Breastfeeding Trainer

March 31st, Dublin
Setting Up Private Practice as an IBCLC

Timetable, more info and book on-line at www.bestservices.ie Training Courses

Resources of the Month

Complementary & Alternative Medicine in Breastfeeding Therapy

Written by an IBCLC who is also qualified in touch therapies, this book reminds that skilled helping is much more than book knowledge,

high-tech aides and quantifiable research.

It outlines the types, history and politics of complementary and alternative methods.

The philosophy, rationale, and available evidence are provided for manipulative/ body-based,

mind-body-based, whole medical systems and energetic medicines.

Taking a holistic approach can assist the mother who can't relax enough to sleep, the infant who reacts with distress rather than pleasure at the breast, and when either is in pain that can't be completely resolved by current lactation practices.

[Order on-line](#) from BEST Services. € 15



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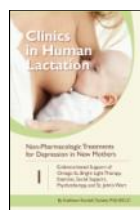
Depression in new mothers: causes, consequences and treatment

Reviews what is depression, why depression is of concern for both mothers and babies, and how it is assessed by scales and other means. It brings together the evidence-base for understanding the causes and for assessing the different treatments.

Emphasises the protective effect of breastfeeding on maternal mental health and how breastfeeding helps recovery.

[Order on-line](#) from BEST Services. € 23.75

Both books are by lactation consultant and psychologist specialising in women's health, Dr Kathleen Kendell-Tackett.



Non-pharmacological Treatments for Depression in a New Mother

May the risks of drug treatment be higher than the benefits? Are non-drug treatments an option? What is the evidence for using psychotherapy, exercise, bright light, Omega-3s, and social support to relieve depression? Is depression an inflammatory response to stress? This

86-page referenced monograph describes the clinical applications of non-pharmacological care.

[Order on-line](#) from BEST Services. € 12.60

THIS ISSUES' FREE DOWNLOADS and LINKS

- ☺ How are infants fed if it snows or floods or power is out? Gribble & Berry review **Emergency preparedness for those who care for infants in developed country contexts** (such as Ireland). They examine both the needs of infants who are breastfed and those who may need artificial formula supplies and provided detailed supply lists for relief kits. Very useful to share with Civil Defence and other providers of emergency relief services. <http://www.internationalbreastfeedingjournal.com/content/6/1/16/abstract>
- ☺ **BFHI Link**, the newsletter of the BFHI in Ireland, **December 2011 issue focused on complementary feeding** - what do health workers need to know and a handout for parents. BFHI Link also has research updates and news. http://www.ihph.ie/babyfriendlyinitiative/bfhi_link.htm
- ☺ **Breastfeeding Fact Sheets for health professionals** are available on the HSE website. The 16 topics include nipple Pain, Mastitis, Prescribing, Colic, Post-natal Depression and more. http://www.breastfeeding.ie/health_professionals/breastfeeding_factsheets/
- ☺ **Free on-line presentations** include the Impact of swaddling on breastfeeding, Anatomy and Physiology of the breast, Common clinical breastfeeding issues, breastfeeding cultures around the world and many more. Also articles to download, news and forum. Available from <http://www.health-e-learning.com/resources/free-lectures>
- ☺ **Guidelines on optimal feeding of low birth-weight infants in low- and middle-income countries** from WHO include recommendations on what to feed low-birth weight infants, when to start feeding, how to feed, how often and how much to feed. Rates the strength and quality of evidence supporting each recommendation. http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/documents/infant_feeding_low_bw/en/index.html
- ☺ **Updated review: Methods of milk expression for lactating women.** Becker GE, Cooney F, Smith HA. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2011, Issue 12. Art. No.: CD006170. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD006170.pub3. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD006170.pub3/abstract> (full article free in Ireland and UK)
- ☺ **New review: Early additional food and fluids for healthy breastfed full-term infants.** Becker GE, Remington S, Remington T. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2011, Issue 12. Art. No.: CD006462. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD006462.pub2. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD006462.pub2/abstract>
- ☺ **20th World Breastfeeding Week (2012) theme: Understanding the Past, Planning the Future** - Celebrating 10 years of the WHO/UNICEF's Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. http://www.waba.org.my/resources/wabalink/pdf/ewaba_link_1211.pdf

Breastfeeding and Human Lactation

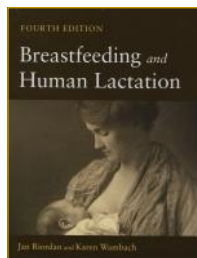
Key text for preparing for IBLCE exam.

Comprehensive reference text for health professionals. Includes theoretical concepts, techniques, care plans, research and colour illustrations. Hardcover for long-lasting reference. By Jan Riordan and Karen Wambach

Accompanying Study Guide available.

[Order on-line](#) from BEST Services.

€45.00

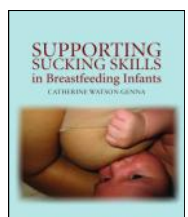


Specials

Supporting Sucking Skills

Multidisciplinary approach with edited chapters on neuroscience, impact of birth on sucking, learning to feed, milk flow, preterm, tongue-tie, and neurological problems. Provides a useable framework for evaluation, interventions and support. Clinical photos, charts and references make for easy understanding. Useful for IBLCE exam candidates and experienced practitioners. By Catherine Watson Genna.

[Order on-line](#) from BEST Services. €32.30



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This newsletter has two interesting pages - read both!