

PRINT-Virtual breastfeeding support available through OSF OnCall

Breastfeeding a newborn can feel like a full-time job, especially in the first two weeks. It's a stressful time with a lot of uncertainty, lack of sleep, conflicting demands, and some babies are cluster feeding – that is when infants want a lot of short feeds over a few hours.

Brianna Jochman, (pronounced Jock-um) RNC-MNN, BSN, CLS, digital care nurse for [OSF OnCall](#), the digital health arm of OSF HealthCare, knows this all too well. She's a certified lactation consultant and a new, first-time mom herself so she understands the struggles. During [National Breastfeeding Awareness Month](#), Jochman wants new moms to know they are not alone and can lean on experts for support.

OSF OnCall is nearing the one-year anniversary of offering virtual education and coaching for new moms who are breastfeeding. Jochman says issues with lactation and latching are common. New or expectant moms can be referred to OSF OnCall for virtual breastfeeding education and coaching through their OB/GYN. Others are referred through the Medicaid Innovation Collaborative (MIC), aimed at supporting women during and after pregnancy.

Jochman says patients love that they can ask questions and get help all from the comfort of their home. She works on camera during virtual visits to show new moms how to position the baby to get the deepest latch. Without that, she says a woman's nipples can become sore and breastfeeding becomes painful.

"We really do try to troubleshoot that latch." Jochman adds, "First, make sure we've got a good deep latch and then if mom is still struggling, we will recommend coconut oil, olive oil, any oil-based product that you can lubricate with. We always want to lubricate before pumping and after breastfeeding."

Jochman says coconut or olive oil is safe for babies if they get a little in their mouth.

A common mistake is not positioning the baby correctly. Jochman says it's best to position your hand under the baby's neck and shoulders to allow them to move their head freely. She recommends using pillows for support and positioning the baby, so their chin touches the breast first.

"You want to keep their chin up and you want to get that deep latch. You don't want to nipple feed and have a superficial latch. Wait until baby gets that open mouth and place baby on as deep as you can."

Self-expression is good for breastfeeding moms

Jochman uses simple demonstrations using a stuffed bunny to show proper positioning and hold. She also encourages women in the early days to self-express milk by using their hands, beginning at the chest wall and then moving forward. To demonstrate, Jochman uses a crochet breast model that allows lactation experts to show the process to new mothers who might be concerned they're not producing enough milk.

That milk then can be saved for a "bonus" feeding.

Another tip – save using the pacifier for about two weeks to help establish a feeding routine while moms are still establishing their milk supply.

Jochman stresses, "We want to make sure in those early days that moms are watching closely for those hunger cues from babies and not getting it confused with comforting them. So, we want them to get that cluster feeding accomplished, get their supply in and then you can introduce that pacifier."

Virtual sessions to select a breast pump and showing how it works and should fit are also available. Jochman says it is important to have the correct fit and that if a feeding is missed, it's important to hand express or pump milk to maintain a regular milk supply.

If a partner or family member wants to give a baby a bottle in the early weeks to give new moms a break, Jochman says there are other ways to support a breastfeeding mother.

“Helping the moms with meals and filling her water or changing baby’s diaper; just little things that really add up to a lot – making sure that mom is well nourished and getting breaks in between feeds so taking baby to another room, taking baby on a walk even.”

During the hot days of summer, some women are concerned their breastfeeding babies need water. Jochman says that’s not the case because the body produces the perfect nutrition for the first six months, so fully breastfed babies don’t need any water until they’ve started eating solid foods.

OSF OnCall breastfeeding support is available to all women, even if they are not an OSF patient. Here is the complete list of resources available:

- **Lactation Consultation:** One-on-one sessions with certified lactation consultants to address breastfeeding challenges, techniques and positioning.
- **Education:** Topics such as breastfeeding benefits, milk supply and pumping are addressed.
- **Resource Provision:** Access to breastfeeding supplies, such as pumps and nursing pads, and referrals to community resources.
- **Nutrition Guidance:** Advice on maternal nutrition and its impact on milk production.
- **Prenatal Education:** Preparing new moms for lactation and what to expect at delivery, in addition to assistance in selecting a pump.
- **Behavioral health referrals:** Nurses find appropriate support services for moms with signs of post partum depression or anxiety.

For an appointment, call 1-(844) 381-3603.

In addition to virtual services through OSF OnCall, the [Breastfeeding Resource Center in Peoria](#) also offers telehealth lactation consultations, and has been doing so since 2018. It can also provide in-person evaluations if an infant is not gaining enough weight, or mother is concerned about her supply. It can offer weighed feeds to see how much a baby is consuming and other issues can be evaluated such as infant suck patterns and tongue movement.

The center sees as many as 75 women in person each month with many more phone consultations. It also offers breastfeeding supplies. It can be reached at (309) 683-6672.

Contact an [OSF hospital near you](#) to learn what services might be available for in-person breastfeeding support and evaluation and for information about in-person support groups for breastfeeding women led by certified lactation consultants.