Galactagogues and Lactogenic Foods

It’s a Matter of Trust and Safety

Placer County Breastfeeding Conference, May 2014
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Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine Protocol #9

- Prescription / Pharmaceutical
- Herbal/Botanical/Culinary/Food
  - Historical Use dates back 2,000 to 6,000 years
  - Generally Regarded safest choice world-wide
  - Not approved by FDA for off label use
- Other substances or techniques that stimulate milk:
  - Beliefs:
    - Acupressure/Reflexology
    - Meditation/Relaxation
  - Aromatherapy

ABM Protocol #9 cont.

Common uses for galactagogues:
- Increase faltering rate of milk production
- Maternal or infant illness, hospitalization or separation (work or school)
- NICU: stimulate initial secretory activation or augment declining milk production
- Long term Hand expressing or pumping often experience faltering of milk supply
- Adoption, induced lactation

World Wide (ABM, Protocol #9)

Mothers in cultures worldwide have been given traditional foods and herbs to:
- Increase milk production,
- Aid milk flow,
- Enhance lactation,
- Increase mothers strength,
- Sanitize mother’s milk

Mechanisms of Action

...most herbals have been established historically through the science of herbalism yet most have not been scientifically evaluated

Traditional use: Historical safety record from 1-6,000 years, suggests safety & efficacy
Professional Ethical Considerations of Herbal Galactagogues,

**Lactogenic Study deficiencies**

Galactagogue studies: pharmaceutical & herbals experience same deficiencies

- Small numbers of study subjects
- Lack of information / breastfeeding advice
- Lack of randomization, controls or blinding

(Academy Breastfeeding Medicine, Protocol #9)

**Current (2011) ABM recommendations**

Due to lack of current research for both pharmacological or herbal galactagogues, the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine does not recommend any specific galactagogue at this time.

**Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine**

**Protocol for use of Galactagogues**

#1. Before using galactagogues to increase milk supply, a full evaluation of current maternal milk supply and effectiveness of milk transfer is imperative

**ABM Galactagogue Protocol**

#2. Women should be informed of any data regarding the efficacy, safety and timing of use of galactagogues

**ABM Galactagogue Protocol**

#3. Screen mothers for contra-indications for chosen galactagogues. Inform mother of side effects

**ABM Galactagogue Protocol**

#4. If a galactagogue is prescribed; ensure appropriate follow-up for milk supply, assess for side effects

2005 ILCA Conference, Cheryl R. Scott PhD, RN, IBCLC
Professional Ethical Considerations of Herbal Galactagogues,

**ABM Galactagogue Protocol**

#5 Short term use has been evaluated for side effects but not for long term use. Recommend synthetic drugs wisely.

**ILCA Code of Ethics Principle 1.2:**

“Evidence based” care based on outcome research & combination of:

- #1 IBCLC’s practical experience &
- #2 Respect for culturally determined preferences and assumptions of the client.

**Scope of Responsibility**

- International Board Certified Lactation Consultant
- La Leche League Peer Counselor
- La Leche League Leader
- WIC Peer Counselor
- Registered Dietician/Nutritionist
- Registered Nurse
- Medical Doctor
- Certified Nurse Midwife
- Pediatric Nurse Practitioner

**IBCLC Competency Statements**

- Maintain a collaborative, supportive relationship with clients, emphasizing individualized family care, client autonomy, informed decision making, and optimal health care
- Interpret current research findings to determine appropriateness for application to practice

**Our Commitment to our patients**

- Honesty & fairness,
- Support cultural practices & preferences for community members,
- Integrity in decision making,
- Ethics in our actions,
- Respect for all individuals

**Respect for ALL Individuals**

- We do not tolerate discrimination or disrespect of the families we serve
- We recognize and embrace the diversity of the families we serve
  
  We respect the characteristics that make each of us unique.
Conflict of Interest:

Lactation Management

- It is time we make lactation management decisions free of actual or potential conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interests.
- Decisions must be fair and objective for the families well being

Responsibilities for Botanical Galactagogues

We do not prepare lactogenic foods for our clients
Culinary / herbal galactagogues are obtained by our clients and self administered by our clients
Know purpose & expected outcomes
Ascertain is this the best choice for this mother
Notify Provider re: recommended tx for lactogenic problem
Identify ethnic/cultural preferences and educate mother on these culinary practices

Lactation Specialist's Responsibilities

- For Pharmaceuticals
  - Only give meds pharmacist has prepared
  - Know purpose & expected outcomes
  - Don't leave meds at bedside
  - Check armband before administering
  - Some meds need checking by 2 RNs
  - Consult with MD if dosage is outside recommended dosage

Your Scope of Practice

Distinguish roles of physician, mother and Lactation Specialist when talking about medications and breastfeeding
Identify how you can help a mother make an informed decision about taking a specific medication or herbal remedy while breastfeeding

Role of Physician / CNM /NP

Only a licensed medical professional (MD, nurse practitioner, Certified Nurse Midwife) can prescribe or recommend a drug to a breastfeeding woman
Only a licensed medical professional can evaluate the safety of a drug for an individual mother and baby.

Role of Lactation Specialist

- Objectively discuss options available to mother.
- Help mother frame questions to ask her doctor or baby's doctor
- Become familiar with references & experts in this field and current recommendations
- Provides mother with information & resources.