

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Early Pumping Protocol

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Objective: The purpose of this study is to determine what supports and resources parents of preterm infants want to encourage breast milk pumping within 1 to 2 days of infant admission to the NICU.

Methods: A 22- item survey was developed pertaining to breast milk pumping for caregivers. Parents whose infants had graduated from the NICU in the past two years were invited to participate. The survey consisted of questions regarding baby demographics, NICU admission and initiation of breast milk pumping, supports and resources, and parent demographics. Open-ended questions were grouped into themes.

Results: Thirty-five out of 48 surveys were completed for a response rate of 75%. One survey was excluded as it did not meet the inclusion criteria. Fifty-one percent (n=18/35) of respondents were able to be present in the NICU within 6 hours after birth. Thirty-seven percent (n=13/35) of respondents were talked to about pumping within 6 hours most commonly by a nurse (n= 27/35, 77%) or lactation consultant (n= 10/35, 29%). The challenges experienced by respondents included stress, low milk supply, fatigue, access to equipment, and differences in nursing approaches to pump breast milk. There were 85% (n=29/35) of respondents who felt they were provided with enough support while pumping breast milk. Respondents felt they were able to successfully initiate breast milk pumping by being shown how to and encouraged by a healthcare professional. Other themes noted for suggested support and resources include access to proper equipment, improving milk supply. Of the respondents, 49% (n=17/35) previously had children, and of those, 76% (n=16/35) previously breastfed their children.

Conclusions: The results suggest that the mothers of discharged premature infants had positive experiences, however, are looking for increased support or resources with breast pump machines, education on the topic (pre- and post-natal), and consistent nursing practice.