

# STUDY GUIDE

## Supporting the Breastfed Baby

### Chapter 1

## The Real Deal on Breastmilk

Susan speaks about her concerns **providing breastmilk** for her foster daughter, Lily. Susan is unsure because Ashley, the birth mother, is in prison and has used drugs in the past.

Breastmilk adapts to a baby's needs, changing as baby ages, and providing a variety of different flavors through the breastmilk. **Formula** can be much harder for the baby to digest due to the static makeup of formula (the "formula" for formula does not vary). Even when the situation is not ideal, providing breastmilk can help both the mother and baby get the best start in their lives together.

Breastfed **stools** will often look very different from formula stools and may vary greatly from day to day, or even from stool to stool. Just like the variety in stools is normal, it is also normal for babies to cry. Babies cry for many reasons; if they are hungry, wet, tired, or need more or less stimulation.

If you are concerned about your baby's stool or crying, talk to your baby's pediatrician.

### Chapter 2

## Is the Milk Safe?

For Sheila, the drug dependent woman in the film, her goal of providing breastmilk to her son was destroyed by a relapse.

In her story, because she tested positive for **drugs** at her son's birth, she was unable to breastfeed or provide pumped milk for her son. Sheila was, however, able to regain sobriety. After 90 days, with the recommendation from her drug counselor and approval by her caseworker, she was able to provide milk for her child.

Sheila's concerns about taking **psychiatric medication** while breastfeeding were put to rest after talking to her health care provider and finding out that her medication was OK to take while breastfeeding. She also felt confident providing her milk to her son even though she has **hepatitis C** because her nipples are healthy and show no signs of cracking or bleeding.

In her story, when Sheila **relapses**, she is then unable to continue to provide breastmilk for her son. This would continue to be true even if she were able to regain sobriety at a later date.

### Chapter 3

## Working with Agencies

Susan speaks with Amy, a DHS **caseworker**, and confirms the need to get **approval** before providing breastmilk to a foster child. Susan's **positive** and open relationship with Ashley shows how good interactions between birth parents and foster parents can improve the situation for everyone involved.

## Chapter 4

# Proper Storage and Handling of Breastmilk

In this chapter, the importance of safe handling of breastmilk is shown through demonstrations.

An essential part of working with breastmilk is proper hand **washing** before handling breastmilk and keeping areas clean when breastmilk is present. The containers should be **cleaned** and rinsed thoroughly with soap and water or run through the dishwasher (on the top rack).

The demonstrators illustrate the following:

- breastmilk can be **stored** in clean glass or BPA-free plastic bottles with tight fitting lids
- special breastmilk storage bags, which can be used to freeze breastmilk, are also suitable for transport and storage of breastmilk
- the use of disposable bottle liners or other plastic bags to store breastmilk is not recommended

Breastmilk can be stored for:

- **24 hours** in a cooler
- **five days** in the refrigerator
- up to **one year** in a deep freezer

## Chapter 5

# Using Breastmilk

In the final chapter of the film, Susan and Ashley's journey together comes to a close as Ashley regains custody of Lily.

Susan shares with Mary her experiences providing breastmilk to Lily. This includes learning that **mixing breastmilk and formula in the same bottle** could lead to wasting breastmilk. Susan goes on to share her feelings about giving a child in the foster care system breastmilk.

Despite her struggles, Ashley discusses with Emma how important it was for her to provide breastmilk for Lily.

Demonstrations illustrate the following:

- it is normal for the fat in breastmilk to **separate** in the freezer
- how to **defrost** frozen milk in the refrigerator for up to one day
- the importance of never warming or defrosting milk in the **microwave**, as it could create "scald spots" that might burn the baby
- running a cold bottle of breastmilk under warm water is a safe way to warm a bottle