

# Human Milk Insights

March 2021

*The Human Milk Insights newsletter presents the latest breastfeeding topics and clinical practice solutions, addresses coding issues challenging the lactation community, features a lactation service, and announces upcoming webinars and conferences.*

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*Happy St. Patrick's Day*

## FEATURED STORIES THIS MONTH

### NEWS YOU CAN USE

- Human Milk and NICU
- Human Milk and Newborn Health
- Human Milk and COVID-19
- Human Milk and Breastfeeding
- Human Milk and COVID-19 Vaccine
- Human Milk and Mental Health

### HUMAN MILK EDUCATION

- Human Milk Monthly Webinar Series
- Five Part Global Webinar Series: Breastfeeding Initiation in Crisis: The Aftereffects of COVID-19
- Dedicated Webpage for Healthcare Professionals on the Global Impact of COVID-19 on Breastfeeding
- New Medela YouTube Channel

### CLINICAL PEARLS IN LACTATION

- Interesting Results from the COVID-19 Mothers Study

### TOOLS YOU CAN USE

- Two Committee Opinions on Breastfeeding from ACOG

### SPOTLIGHT ON PRACTICE

- Virginia R. Wall, MN, RN, IBCLC

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

### HUMAN MILK AND NICU

#### Human Colostrum and Derived Extracellular Vesicles Prevent Infection by Human Rotavirus and Respiratory Syncytial Virus in Vitro

Andrea Civra.../Feb.2021

Antiviral activity in human colostrum and protective effect against rotavirus and RSV.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33534629/>

#### Proactive Lactation Care is Associated With improved Outcomes in a Referral NICU

Rebecca Hoban.../ Feb 2021

Retrospective study suggesting improvement in outcomes with proactive lactation care in the high risk NICU population.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0890334421993467>

### USBC: The United States Breastfeeding Committee

Updated website resource for breastfeeding and COVID-19

<http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/p/cm/ld/fid=33?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=78a4327c-a226-4024-bee2-dc0226be34ab&eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=a4962b96-8e3f-41aa-ab70-9f9d1e0e193d>

### HUMAN MILK AND NEWBORN HEALTH

#### World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action Released Detailed Statement on Food Security

Breastfeeding and provision of total food security for the first 6 months of life.

<https://www.waba.org.my/resources/activity-sheet/acsh10.htm?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=a4962b96-8e3f-41aa-ab70-9f9d1e0e193d>

### HUMAN MILK AND COVID-19

#### Maternal and Infant Outcomes Associated with Maternity Practices Related to COVID-19: The COVID Mothers Study

Melissa C. Bartick.../Feb 2021

Retrospective cohort study examination of evidence-based practices in postpartum care and impact on positivity rates of babies born to mothers with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

<https://doi.org/10.1089/bfm.2020.0353>

#### Case Study

Case Study Supporting Lack of SARS-CoV-2 Spread to a 3 month Old Infant through Exclusive Breastfeeding

Wei Liu, Yujie Liu.../Feb 2021

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0890334421991072>

### HUMAN MILK AND BREASTFEEDING

#### Reliability of Markers for Breast Hypoplasia in the Early Postpartum Period

Renee L. Kam.../Feb 2021

Examination of the reliability of variables for measuring intra- mammary width and predictability of insufficient milk supply.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0890334421991071>

### HUMAN MILK AND COVID-19 VACCINATION

#### MEDELA

COVID-19 Vaccination During Pregnancy and Breastfeeding: A Summary of Current Recommendations

<https://www.medela.us/breastfeeding-professionals/blog/covid-19-vaccination-during-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding-a-summary-of-current-recommendations>

## HUMAN MILK AND MENTAL HEALTH

### Exclusive Breastfeeding Moderates the Association Between Prenatal and Postpartum Depression

Barbara Figueiredo, PhD.../ Feb 2021  
Investigation of maternal mental health benefits, specifically post-partum depression, associated with exclusive breastfeeding

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0890334421991051>  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0890334421991051>

### Randomized Clinical Trial of a Prenatal Breastfeeding and Mental Health Mixed Management Intervention

Ying Zhao PhD.../Feb 2021  
Comparison of intervention for both prevention and health promotion of maternal mental health in relation to breastfeeding outcomes

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0890334421991058>

## HUMAN MILK EDUCATION

Breast milk initiation and breastfeeding has changed drastically over the last year due to the effects of COVID-19 on our hospital systems, our healthcare professionals and breastfeeding families. Join us for a series of thought leadership-based webinars designed to raise awareness of COVID-19 and breastfeeding and the impact of the coronavirus on breast milk initiation. Each month, we'll learn about areas of breastfeeding research from leading human milk researchers and clinicians to better understand these dynamic changes, current research and findings, and where we go from here. The next webinar in this five part series will be presented on Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup>. [Rebecca Powell, PhD, CLC](#) will present her topic [The Antibody Response Against SARS-CoV-2](#)

[\(COVID-19\) in Human Milk](#). Complimentary registration is now open! For more information or to register, visit [www.MedelaEducation.com](http://www.MedelaEducation.com).

On Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, [Kelli D. Kelley](#) will present her topic [The Psychosocial Impact of COVID-19 on NICU Families](#).

Complimentary registration is now open! For more information or to register, visit [www.MedelaEducation.com](http://www.MedelaEducation.com)

Our 2021 webinar schedule is available! Click [here](#) to download a copy.

Medela would like to invite you to look at a brand-new dedicated webpage for healthcare professionals on the global impact of COVID-19 on breastfeeding. It contains a lot of resources, important facts and figures from research, and educational materials for professionals.

[www.medela.com/breastfeedingduringcovid](http://www.medela.com/breastfeedingduringcovid)

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about changes in clinical practice on the maternity ward: a shortened length of stay in the hospital after delivery, the possible separation of the mother from her baby and increased pressure on healthcare personnel.

All these factors can impact the appropriate initiation of the mother's breastfeeding journey as well as its duration. In order to provide you the latest information and research results on breastfeeding, breast milk, safety and health of pregnant women, nursing mothers and their babies in the COVID-19 era, we have created a bespoke webinar series. Click [here](#) to listen to these recorded webinars.

### Neonatal Perspectives

This is a blog for NICU professionals that features clinical information from neonatal consultants, as well as industry news and

popular topics. Click [here](#) to read the latest blogs.

### **Spotlight on Practice**

Our column titled Spotlight on Practice is for lactation practitioners and facilities who wish to acknowledge the work of others. We invite you to submit suggested practitioners or facilities you would like to spotlight. If you have a suggestion, email [education@medela.com](mailto:education@medela.com).

### **Medela YouTube Channel**

Medela is happy to announce our new YouTube channel for [Lactation Professionals!](#) Professionals can now access Medela in-servicing and instructional videos on YouTube in a format tailored specifically for the healthcare professional. Select patient education, including the newly released breastfeeding series with lactation consultant and midwife, Katie James, IBCLC, has also been included. Each video includes a short description and relevant links to the product page on medela.us.  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCONXFpEp4zbKNZEqHroMHTQ/featured>

## CLINICAL PEARLS IN LACTATION

*This column is for lactation practitioners to share clinical challenges and successes, observations and pearls with colleagues. To share a clinical pearl, [submit it here](#). If your submission is selected for publication in a future issue of Human Milk Insights, you will receive a \$25.00 VISA gift card.*

### Interesting Results From the COVID Mothers Study

It has been a little over one year since the SARS-CoV-2 virus entered the United States and over 500,000 lives have now been lost. At the beginning of the pandemic, scientists and physicians knew very little about the virus; they were concerned about the possibility of vertical transmission from mother to baby via breastfeeding. Maternity units in hospitals separated babies immediately after birth from their mothers who either tested COVID-19 positive or were suspected to be infected. They were not allowed to be within six feet of each other and mothers were advised to not breastfeed directly; they could pump and someone else could feed the baby their milk. Many perinatal care providers were concerned that the disruption of best maternity care practices would adversely affect breastfeeding.

A group of researchers from various countries just published a paper in *Breastfeeding Medicine*, specifically looking at the infant being within arm's reach of the mother as opposed to being six feet away, direct breastfeeding, uninterrupted skin-to-skin care, and resulting vertical transmission. They wanted to see whether breastfeeding might protect infants against COVID-19, and they also wanted to study how the mother was affected by the separation.

The study design was somewhat complex as it involved surveying mothers from 31 countries in ten languages. Mothers were recruited through social media, breastfeeding support groups, WIC offices, healthcare providers, and word of mouth. Details are explained in the Methods and Materials section of the article and in the tables.

A total of 1830 responses were received, but only 357 were used for analysis. The study found no statistically significant increases in an infant becoming symptomatic or SARS-CoV-2 positive when cared for skin-to-skin for >1 hour, kept at arms' reach, or directly breastfed than those who were separated from mothers at birth, kept in a separate room or fed human milk by other means. The majority of mothers interviewed stated they were stressed by the separation and 29% of separated mothers were unable to breastfeed once reunited with their babies. In addition, babies who were separated from their mothers were markedly less likely to be exclusively breastfed at 3 months than those who were kept at arms' reach.

This study adds to the growing evidence that keeping mothers and babies together within arms' reach and continuing skin-to-skin care and direct breastfeeding is most likely safe for mothers who test positive for SARS-CoV-2. The researchers suggest that separation of mothers and infants could result in adverse outcomes. Not only may infants be at increased risk of respiratory infections, including SARS-CoV-2 and

influenza, but there are inherent harms to breastfeeding success and maternal stress due to mother infant separation. The authors express concern that in the future medical authorities should consider the risks and benefits of any policies that include any form of separating of mothers and infants.

Reference:

Bartick, MC, Valdes, V, Giusti, A. et al. (2021). Maternal and infant outcomes associated with maternity practices related to COVID-19: The COVID mothers study. Breastfeeding Medicine: 16(3), electronically accessed 02/21/2021.

<https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1089/bfm.2020.0353>

## TOOLS YOU CAN USE

### Two Committee Opinions on Breastfeeding From ACOG

In February 2021, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) released two Committee Opinions related to breastfeeding. These are important publications because women's health and prenatal care providers are influential in educating women about the benefits of breastfeeding and in providing optimal breastfeeding support before, during and after birth. Obstetric healthcare professionals of all types look to professional organizations for guidance on how to help women achieve their infant feeding goals.

*“Breastfeeding Barriers: Supporting Initiation and Continuation of Breastfeeding”* was developed by the Committee on Healthcare for Underserved Women and the Breastfeeding Expert Work Group. The Committee Opinion describes hospital and societal barriers to breastfeeding, as well as challenges faced by specific populations. This Committee Opinion acknowledges that despite myriad benefits of breastfeeding to both mothers and babies, many parents experience obstacles that lead to reduced rates of breastfeeding initiation and duration.

This Committee Opinion stresses the importance of OB providers educating patients prenatally so they can make informed decisions on whether to breastfeed. OB-GYNs and other practitioners are encouraged to use a multidisciplinary approach to help parents overcome obstacles and to advocate for policies that increase support.

Obstacles, such as hospital practices, practitioner barriers, the patient with trauma or complex medical issues and barriers for LGBTQ+ and incarcerated parents are addressed. Other issues like societal barriers, healthcare inequities, substance abuse, and teen parenting require unique strategies and resources to assist with breastfeeding. Various resources, websites and support groups are referenced throughout the paper.

The second Committee Opinion, *“Breastfeeding Challenges”*, was developed by the Breastfeeding Expert Work Group and the Committee on Obstetric Practice. Although the incidence of breastfeeding initiation in the US is over 80%, the percentage of women breastfeeding exclusively at 6 months is only 25%. Many women experience weaning earlier than desired for various reasons and are unable to meet breastfeeding goals. This Committee Opinion includes information on some of the challenges they face: engorgement, persistent pain, low milk supply and galactogogues, mastitis, special concerns for preterm and early-term infants, medication use during lactation, guidelines for breastfeeding and substance use disorder, and palpable breast mass.

As evidenced by multiple studies, not only is breastfeeding associated with incomparable health benefits for babies but also provides incredible benefits for a woman's health throughout her lifetime. Studies show these important benefits such as a decreased risk for diabetes mellitus, breast cancer, ovarian and endometrial cancers, hypertensive and cardiovascular health disease are “dose-dependent” – the longer a woman breastfeeds in her lifetime, the more benefit she receives. ACOG recommends breastfeeding exclusively for six months and for one year or longer as complementary foods are added to the infant's diet for as long as mutually desired. OB-GYNs and other obstetric care providers are in a unique position to help women

achieve their breastfeeding goals and should be able to troubleshoot common breastfeeding challenges.

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2021). ACOG Committee Opinion No. 820. *Breastfeeding challenges*. *Obstetrics and Gynecology*; 137(2):e47-52.

<https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2021/02/breastfeeding-challenges>

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2021). ACOG Committee Opinion No 821. *Barriers to breastfeeding: Supporting initiation and continuation of breastfeeding*.

*Obstetrics and Gynecology*; 137:e54-62. <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2021/02/barriers-to-breastfeeding-supporting-initiation-and-continuation-of-breastfeeding?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=3b9d0f7d-d7e1-4341-8ed6-36d73f133555>

## SPOTLIGHT ON PRACTICE

This column is for lactation practitioners and facilities who wish to acknowledge the work of others. We invite you to submit suggested practitioners or facilities you would like to spotlight. If you have a suggestion, email [education@medela.com](mailto:education@medela.com).

*This month we are spotlighting Virginia R. Wall, MN, RN, IBCLC  
Seattle, WA*

Virginia R. Wall, known to family and friends as Ginna, is the renowned founder of the lactation program at the University of Washington Medical Center (UW). On March 17, this prominent breastfeeding program will celebrate its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A recognized leader within the lactation profession, and a passionate professional assisting breastfeeding families, Ginna is also known as a trailblazer for lactation services at UW.

Ginna and her 4 siblings grew up outside Philadelphia in Delaware County. An interest in caring for children led her to begin studying early education in college. Ginna changed her major to nursing after she realized she preferred studying science. The guidance of a favorite college professor, "Do what you really want", directed her to seek a nursing position as a pediatric nurse rather than the traditional 'work for a year in medical-surgical nursing,' a then-popular trend. The decision to become a perinatal clinician was made after Ginna cared for critically ill children; the sadness of seeing her patients succumb to their illnesses was devastating and she needed a change.

After completing graduate work at UW, Ginna's career path centered around the care of well newborns. Early in the role as an Assistant Nurse Manager, she instinctively knew centralized nurseries that separated mothers and their babies was wrong. With the support of likeminded, bold fellow managers, she began a campaign to educate clinicians about breastfeeding and rooming-in care. Ginna's experience as a breastfeeding advocate and IBCLC led her to establish the Lactation Program at UW and direct the facility to achieve the Baby Friendly recognition.

Together with Molly Pessl, Ginna was one of the first teachers of the clinical lactation education course at Evergreen Hospital. This 5-day lactation educators' course was planned and directed by Molly and Ann Keppler. Now offered through Evergreen Perinatal Education, it remains a popular program for clinicians preparing to take the IBCLC exam. Ginna stepped in to co-teach this course after Ann stepped down from her role. Ginna continues to serve as faculty for Evergreen Perinatal Education.

Ginna is a gifted teacher and author. She has presented at countless local, national and international lactation conferences and authored numerous peer-reviewed lactation articles including co-authoring a JOGNN article identifying the nursing diagnosis of ineffective breastfeeding.

Ginna is the recipient of numerous honors and awards. She has received the Nurse Excellence Award, employee of the month and Nursing Preceptor Shining Star award from the UW, was a finalist for the Nurse Excellence Award for Lifetime Achievement (March of Dimes) and for the Nurse Excellence Award for Teaching (NurseWeek). Ginna has been the recipient of the March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Award for her distinguished career, the Nancy Danoff Spirit of

Service Award by the Breastfeeding Coalition of Washington, the DAISY Award, and a co-recipient of the UWMC Golden Eddy Award. Ginna has served on the Editorial Board of the Journal of Human Lactation, served as past Chair of the Seattle-King County Breastfeeding Coalition, was selected to the Examination Committee of IBCLE and is an adjunct faculty member at Bastyr University.

Married for 40 years, Ginna and her husband Stephen serendipitously met at a youth camp in Maine 42 years ago. Both had taken temporary summer positions but at the end of the summer, Ginna moved to Seattle to attend graduate school. Stephen soon followed and they settled in Seattle where they raised their daughter and son. As the coronavirus has turned lives upside down, Ginna and Stephen are prevented from visiting with their daughter in New York and their son, his wife and their granddaughter living close by. A classically trained tenor and professional opera singer, Stephen was set to perform his 100<sup>th</sup> production of 'La Boheme' last spring with the Seattle Opera. But his opera performances changed with the onset of the pandemic. Weary of giving singing lessons over Zoom, he ventured out onto his front lawn and began singing. Thus began his daily lawn performances at 5pm. From April to June, Stephen performed from his front yard, where neighbors, practicing social distancing and with lawn chairs in hand, gathered to listen. Ginna sat close by and marveled at her husband's talent and the way he brought joy to others during the pandemic. Stephen recognizes the real 'stars' are those on the frontline administering to needy families and patients. He calls Ginna a warrior woman and a true commando.

Ginna will soon retire from her position as the Lactation Services Coordinator at UW but will remain active in the local lactation community. In retirement, she wishes to embrace her love of swimming with synchronized swimming, renew her love of watercolor painting, and continue her passion for reading nursing research.

Ginna's legendary reputation as a committed lactation professional, her endless energy in educating clinicians, and support of breastfeeding families will long be remembered. The lactation community is grateful for her many contributions and talents.