BREASTFEEDING

PRE-TERM INFANTS

RATIONALE
- Human milk is important in establishing enteral nutrition
- Any amount of mother’s fresh breast milk is better than none
- Physician advocacy has a strong influence on intention to feed

IMPLEMENTATION
- In pregnancy at high-risk of premature delivery, discuss feeding during antenatal period
- During mother’s first visit to NICU, discuss value/benefits
- Document discussion in medical record
- Separate decision to provide a few weeks of pumped breast milk from the commitment to long-term, exclusive breastfeeding
- Praise efforts to provide expressed breast milk
- Ensure adequate discussion and provision of written information on hand-expression, and on mode and frequency of pump use

CONTRAINDICATIONS TO BREASTFEEDING

Infants with galactosaemia should not receive breast milk

HIV in UK
- Always check maternal HIV status before breastfeeding
- Breastfeeding absolutely contraindicated (in UK)
- If you are concerned that mother intends to breastfeed, ensure an HIV specialist explains the risk to which infant will be exposed

HIV in developing countries
- If returning to a developing country where there is no access to clean water, exclusive breastfeeding is safer than mixed

Maternal medications
- Antimetabolites or cytotoxic drugs
- Radioisotope investigation (until isotope clears)
- See ‘Medications and mother’s milk’ by T W Hale or Neonatal Formulary or BNF 61 – page 19

A current, reliable reference for drugs and breastfeeding must be available on the neonatal unit

BREASTFEEDING WHERE SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS REQUIRED

Tuberculosis
- Maternal sputum-positive TB is not a contraindication to breastfeeding
- If mother on isoniazid give prophylactic pyridoxine to mother and infant
- Give infant isoniazid 5 mg/kg once/day, unless maternal isolate known to be resistant
- Tuberculin test at 3 months
  - if negative, give BCG
  - if positive, assess for active TB. If assessment negative, continue isoniazid for 6 months total

Cytomegalovirus (CMV)
- Mothers who have a primary CMV infection or a reactivation may be infective. Take senior microbiological advice on testing and feeding
- Pasteurisation of milk inactivates CMV
Hepatitis B
- Risk of transmission can be almost totally eliminated by a combination of active and passive immunisation
- Breastfeeding is not contraindicated
- See Hepatitis B and C guideline

Hepatitis C
- Transmission by breastfeeding theoretically possible but has not been documented
- Breastfeeding not contraindicated but inform mother that risks are unknown

Varicella-zoster virus (VZV)
- Infants of mothers with active VZV can reduce risk by avoiding breastfeeding until mother is no longer infectious (5 days from onset of rash)
- Premature babies <1 kg, <28 weeks are considered high risk and should be given VZIG (see Varicella guideline)

Herpes simplex type 1
- Stop women with herpetic lesions on breast from breastfeeding or feeding expressed breast milk from affected side (until lesions have healed)
- cover active lesions elsewhere
- careful hand hygiene essential
- affected side – cover and pump and discard milk (no breastfeeding) until lesions are clear
- unaffected side – can breastfeed and use expressed breast milk

Phenylketonuria (PKU)
- Breastfeeding not contraindicated in infants with PKU
- Screening service will contact paediatric dietitians directly
- Careful dietetic management necessary
- All infants should be under care of paediatric dietitians

Radioactive diagnostic agents
- Women receiving radioactive diagnostic agents need to pump and discard milk for varying periods of time
- although most agents have very short plasma half-lives, seek advice from hospital nuclear medicine department

Medications
- For medications that require caution with breastfeeding, see references given above
- check all maternal medication against texts above

Social drugs
- Alcohol
  - discourage more than limited consumption
- Nicotine
  - nicotine concentration in breast milk increases immediately after smoking
  - discourage mothers from smoking directly before breastfeeding or expressing