

- **Consultant's Corner: Preparing for breastfeeding when prenatal testing has shown that baby has issues.**

The Lactitude Consultations brochure states that a mother can meet with a Lactation Consultant before baby's arrival "if the baby has a handicap." Meeting with and LC allows the mother to have access to research and other mothers' experiences with this situation. In this way she can get organized before baby's arrival.

The following situation illustrates this approach well. Solenn is already the mother of a little boy, Noa, whom she breastfed for several months. Furthermore she is a pediatric nurse who is very involved in breastfeeding in her professional life. The new baby is due at the end of June. In the spring, a sonogram shows that there is a cleft lip. Solenn wants to breastfeed this baby just as she had her first son. She asks if her plan is feasible. She decides to meet with Charlotte Bodeven to evaluate the situation. In the days leading up to the appointment the LC collects all the published information on the subject as well as the pertinent practical information. When necessary, documents are translated. In this case, the most useful document is the Breastfeeding Academy of Medicine's protocol on breastfeeding an infant with a cleft lip, cleft palate or cleft lip and palate.

ABM protocol' n°17 Recommendations for breastfeeding and infant with cleft lip, cleft palate or cleft lip and palate.

<http://www.bfmed.org/Resources/Protocols.aspx>

Regarding a simple cleft lip, the probability for success is very high. All of the possible scenarios where considered:

- If the baby nurses, what position should be used?
- If the baby won't nurse in the early days how to hand express the colostrum?
- If the baby won't nurse or has difficulty nursing beyond the first days how to use an electric breast pump, what kind of pump to use, what equipment is needed to feed the baby etc.

On June 28th little Timothé was born (well he wasn't that little seeing as he weighed 3 kg 710!) and he immediately nursed effectively.

Sometimes a baby is unable to nurse; a previous little boy also named Timothée, with a cleft lip and palate was unable to nurse effectively. His mother used an effective double pump and was immediately able to establish lactation. After optimizing it over a 2 week period she was able to go from pumping 8 times per 24 hour to 4 times and to stabilize her production at 1L per 24hrs. The baby benefited from his mother's milk for the first 6 months of his life until his palate surgery. That was his mother's objective, who wanted to protect him as much as possible from the ear and other infections that are so common in cleft palate babies.

<http://www.lactitude.com/docs/Lactitude/docs/m15.pdf>

Forewarned is probably forearmed but also in many cases breastfed!