Introduction to "Chestfeeding"

What is "chestfeeding"?

The basic definition of "chestfeeding" is feeding your baby with milk from your chest (1). It can also involve using a feeding tube attached to the nipple to feed your baby if lactation is not a possibility (2).

As with breastfeeding, "Chestfeeding" provides opportunities for skin to skin contact (1).

"Chestfeeding" is a gender-inclusive term that anyone can use. It is often used because some individuals feel that terms such as "breastfeeding" or "nursing" do not match how they identify their anatomy (2).

How to support people who chestfeed?

Use the terms and descriptions that parents want you to use. When working with a parent, ask them how they identify, their pronouns, and how they describe their feeding process for their baby.

If you are unsure what terms to use, try to use gender-inclusive language.

Help normalize the term "chestfeeding" to be used alongside "breastfeeding."

Why use the term "chestfeeding"?

We should use this term to be respectful of all people who choose to feed their baby using human milk. We want all new parents to feel comfortable and supported.

Providing resources that fit the needs and practices of any new parent is essential to helping them feel acknowledged, supported, and seen. Using inclusive language can help all parents.

People who commonly use the term "chestfeeding"

A transgender man may use the term "chestfeeding" if they had chest masculinization surgery, also known as top surgery, to remove breast tissue (3).

A non-binary individual may feel more comfortable using the term "chestfeeding" as it is not associated with any particular gender or identity.

Cisgender women may use this term because of past trauma that they have experienced, and they may feel uncomfortable using other terms to describe feeding their children (3).

Sources:
1) https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/having-a-baby-if-you-are-lgbt-plus/chestfeeding-if-youre-trans-or-non-binary/
2)https://www.healthline.com/health/chestfeeding#definition
3) https://www.mother.ly/life/what-is-chestfeeding/

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