

## **“Doing Both”**

### ***Suggestions on how to respond when mothers say they want to both breastfeed and bottle feed***

#### **Background:**

- Mothers who say they want to “*do both*” generally know that breastfeeding is important, but may be unaware of the potential for harm from formula supplementation on their baby’s health, their own health, and their ability develop and maintain a milk supply, and thus, be able to “*do both*”.
- Use open ended questions to find out what she means by “*both*”, and the reasons she wants to bottle feed too. Addressing her concerns with correct information in a caring manner will help mothers make an informed choice and feel supported.
- For mothers who persist in saying they want to “*do both*”, offering consistent short messages that reinforce *the importance of initiating exclusive breastfeeding in order to develop a milk supply and thus have the ability to “do both”* will help a mother achieve her goal, and will convey supportive customer service. And, she may decide that exclusive breastfeeding is enjoyable and convenient, and may want to continue for longer than she had anticipated wanting to. Remember that additional support is available to her post-discharge from the WIC Program.

#### **Concise sample language for a hypothetical scenario where a mother insists on “*both*”:**

*That’s great that you want to breastfeed. By breastfeeding you are giving your baby the best start in life.*

*May I help you get started so that you can “do both” for as long as you like?*

*The way to “do both” is to start with breastfeeding only. That will help your body begin to produce milk and will help your milk supply develop according to your baby’s needs. If you use bottles now, your body will think there is no baby, and you will lose your milk, and you will probably not be able to breastfeed at all after a short time.*

*Using the bottle now may also make it difficult for your baby to breastfeed because he will become confused between the hard bottle nipple, and your own soft warm nipple. Using the bottle now may also cause you to have breast problems including engorgement and infections.*

*You can introduce the bottle later – usually at about 4 – 6 weeks - without having these problems. We will give you lots of help here in the hospital, and you can come to our clinic or WIC for help you after you leave.*