411 Inappropriate Nutrition Practices for Infants

Definition/Cut-off Value

Routine use of feeding practices that may result in impaired nutrient status, disease, or health problems. These practices, with examples, are outlined below. Refer to “Attachment to 411-Justification and References” for this criterion.

Participant Category and Priority Level

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Inappropriate Nutrition Practices for Infants

Examples of Inappropriate Nutrition Practices (including but not limited to)

Examples of substitutes:
- Low iron formula without iron supplementation;
- Cow’s milk, goat’s milk, or sheep’s milk (whole, reduced fat, low-fat, skim), canned evaporated or sweetened condensed milk; and
- Imitation or substitute milks (such as rice- or soy-based beverages, non-dairy creamer), or other “homemade concoctions.”

411.1 Routinely using a substitute(s) for breast milk or for FDA approved iron-fortified formula as the primary nutrient source during the first year of life

- Using a bottle to feed fruit juice.
- Feeding any sugar-containing fluids, such as soda/soft drinks, gelatin water, corn syrup solutions, and sweetened tea.
- Allowing the infant to fall asleep or be put to bed with a bottle at naps or bedtime.
- Allowing the infant to use the bottle without restriction (e.g., walking around with a bottle) or as a pacifier.
- Propping the bottle when feeding.
- Allowing an infant to carry around and drink throughout the day from a covered or training cup.
- Adding any food (cereal or other solid foods) to the infant’s bottle.

411.2 Routinely using nursing bottles or cups improperly.
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| 411.3 Routinely offering complementary foods* or other substances that are inappropriate in type or timing.  
*Complementary foods are any foods or beverages other than breast milk or infant formula. | Examples of inappropriate complementary foods:  
- Adding sweet agents such as sugar, honey, or syrups to any beverage (including water) or prepared food, or used on a pacifier; and  
- Any food other than breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula before 4 months of age. |
| 411.4 Routinely using feeding practices that disregard the developmental needs or stage of the infant. | • Inability to recognize, insensitivity to, or disregarding the infant’s cues for hunger and satiety (e.g., forcing an infant to eat a certain type and/or amount of food or beverage or ignoring an infant’s hunger cues).  
• Feeding foods of inappropriate consistency, size, or shape that put infants at risk of choking.  
• Not supporting an infant’s need for growing independence with self-feeding (e.g., solely spoon-feeding an infant who is able and ready to finger-feed and/or try self-feeding with appropriate utensils).  
• Feeding an infant food with inappropriate textures based on his/her developmental stage (e.g., feeding primarily pureed or liquid foods when the infant is ready and capable of eating mashed, chopped or appropriate finger foods). |
| 411.5 Feeding foods to an infant that could be contaminated with harmful microorganisms or toxins. | Examples of potentially harmful foods:  
- Unpasteurized fruit or vegetable juice;  
- Unpasteurized dairy products or soft cheeses such as feta, Brie, Camembert, blue-veined, and Mexican-style cheese;  
- Honey (added to liquids or solid foods, used in cooking, as part of processed foods, on a pacifier, etc.);  
- Raw or undercooked meat, fish, poultry, or eggs;  
- Raw vegetable sprouts (alfalfa, clover, bean, and radish);  
- Undercooked or raw tofu; and  
- Deli meats, hot dogs, and processed meats (avoid unless heated until steaming hot). |
| 411.6 Routinely feeding inappropriately diluted formula. | • Failure to follow manufacturer’s dilution instructions (to include stretching formula for household economic reasons).  
• Failure to follow specific instructions accompanying a prescription. |
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| 411.7 Routinely limiting the frequency of nursing of the exclusively breastfed infant when breast milk is the sole source of nutrients. | Examples of inappropriate frequency of nursing:  
• Scheduled feedings instead of demand feedings;  
• Less than 8 feedings in 24 hours if less than 2 months of age; and  
• Less than 6 feedings in 24 hours if between 2 and 6 months of age. |
| 411.8 Routinely feeding a diet very low in calories and/or essential nutrients. | Examples:  
• Vegan diet;  
• Macrobiotic diet; and  
• Other diets very low in calories and/or essential nutrients. |
| 411.9 Routinely using inappropriate sanitation in preparation, handling, and storage of expressed breastmilk or formula. | Examples of inappropriate sanitation:  
• Limited or no access to a:  
  o Safe water supply (documented by appropriate officials),  
  o Heat source for sterilization, and/or  
  o Refrigerator or freezer for storage.  
• Failure to properly prepare, handle, and store bottles or storage containers of expressed breastmilk or formula. |
| 411.10 Feeding dietary supplements with potentially harmful consequences. | Examples of dietary supplements, which when fed in excess of recommended dosage, may be toxic or have harmful consequences:  
• Single or multi-vitamins;  
• Mineral supplements; and  
• Herbal or botanical supplements/remedies/teas. |
| 411.11 Routinely not providing dietary supplements recognized as essential by national public health policy when an infant’s diet alone cannot meet nutrient requirements. |  
• Infants who are 6 months of age or older who are ingesting less than 0.25 mg of fluoride daily when the water supply contains less than 0.3 ppm fluoride.  
• Infants who are exclusively breastfed, or who are ingesting less than 1 liter (or 1 quart) per day of vitamin D-fortified formula, and are not taking a supplement of 400 IU of vitamin D. |