

Tailoring lactation education to the cultural needs of orthodox Jewish families

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Breastfeeding is an accepted practice for millions of women worldwide

and strongly endorse by the World Health Organization. To provide appropriate counseling about human milk and breastfeeding, it is important to understand cultural beliefs and customs related to the practice.

Understanding Orthodox Jewish customs regarding breastfeeding is especially important for [health care providers](#) because the Orthodox population in the United States is growing. Orthodox women get married younger and have twice as many children as non-Orthodox Jews. Some of these families are at higher risk for conceiving infants with genetic disorders, who may require special care and continued hospitalization after the mother has been discharged.

In a new article published in *The American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing*, nurse researchers examine Orthodox Jewish practices related to the provision of [human milk](#) and breastfeeding for a sick newborn. The article guides nurses in providing culturally competent lactation education, and evidence based guidance to meet the individual needs of each Orthodox Jewish infant and family. It is critical for the family to have conversations with their Rabbi ideally before delivery or at time of birth to determine needs for saving colostrum and milk, as well as, [milk](#) expression during Shabbat or religious holidays.

"Personalized, culturally and religiously tailored care, education, and counseling can ensure that Orthodox mothers are able to meet their personal [breastfeeding](#) goals even if their infant requires hospitalization at birth," says Diane L. Spatz, Ph.D., RN-BC, FAAN, the Helen M. Shearer Term Professor of Nutrition at University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (Penn Nursing), one of the article's co-authors.

More information: Breastfeeding Guidance for Orthodox Jewish Families When Newborns Require Special Care and Continued Hospitalization, *The American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing*, 2019.

Provided by University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

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