To Whom It May Concern:

Throughout the past few decades, the many benefits of breastmilk and breastfeeding have been well-established through research, with new discoveries being made every year. In the case of a mother who gives birth to a baby with Clubfoot, the benefits of breastfeeding may be even more significant, positively impacting the overall health of both mother and baby. Primarily, the areas of benefit would likely involve the mother and baby’s bonding process, the baby’s immune system, and post-surgical healing.

Knowing that a baby with Clubfoot will have to undergo several hospitalizations in the early months of life, the comfort and security of breastfeeding can play a significant role in the child’s emotional well-being during the stressful periods of time in the overstimulating clinical environment. Similarly, the mother’s bond with her baby will be enhanced by the hormonal influences of breastfeeding, despite periods of brief separation while baby is in surgery or other treatments. The early postpartum weeks are a critical time in the establishment of emotional security for a new baby, and there is no bonding method more natural and complete than time spent at breast.

Similarly, early encounters with the hospital environment may expose the young infant to a variety of infectious risks, as does surgery itself. Breastmilk, with its multitude of live, protective factors, will provide the baby with optimal resistance to any hospital-acquired infections. The very act of breastfeeding helps a mother’s body recognize the bacterial exposure that the baby has encountered, and appropriate antibodies will be developed and delivered via the milk.

Finally, when it comes to any surgery performed at any age, the successful repair of wounded tissues depends on optimal nutrition. Breastmilk has been established through research as the most complete form of nutrition that a baby can receive. All necessary components for proper wound healing are present in milk, and are considered to be more bio-available than in any other method of feeding. There have also been studies on pain perception in young infants, and it has been found that the sweet taste of breastmilk is associated with reduced pain perception in babies.

With these aspects of breastfeeding’s benefits well-established through both current and continuing research, it seems advisable to protect and promote a healthy breastfeeding relationship for the mother/baby dyads who will also be encountering the complexities of Clubfoot treatment. The risks of early hospitalization and stressful, potentially painful treatments can be alleviated at least partially through the act of breastfeeding and the protective features of breastmilk. Please feel free to contact me if more information about this subject is desired.

Sincerely,

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