

BREAST CRAWL: AN INITIATION TO BREASTFEEDING

Rajesh .P Joseph,¹ Aghera Ruchita²

¹*Associate Professor, Department of Paediatric Nursing, Sumandeep Nursing College,
Sumandeep Vidyapeeth deemed to be University,
Piparia, Waghodia, Vadodara - 391760, Gujarat*

²*Undergraduate Nursing student, Sumandeep Nursing College,
Sumandeep Vidyapeeth deemed to be University,
Piparia, Waghodia, Vadodara - 391760, Gujarat*

Corresponding Author

Mr. Rajesh .P Joseph

*Associate Professor, Department of Paediatric Nursing,
Sumandeep Nursing College,
Sumandeep Vidyapeeth deemed to be University,
Piparia, Waghodia, Vadodara - 391760, Gujarat
E- mail: rajesh.p.joseph@gmail.com*

INTRODUCTION

Breast crawl is the instinct of mammal (including human) newborns to move towards the nipple and attach to it for breastfeeding all by themselves.¹It was first described in 1987 at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden (Widstrom et al, 1987).In humans, if the newborn baby is put on the mother's abdomen, the movements start 12 to 44 minutes after birth, followed by spontaneous suckling at 27 to 71 minutes after birth¹.The infants use their sense of smell in finding the nipple. The areola smells similar to amniotic fluid, the baby recognizes this smell on its hands and begins to move towards the breast.

DEFINITION

“Every newborn, when placed on her mother's abdomen, soon after birth, has the ability to find her mother's breast all on her own and to decide when to take the first breastfeed. This is called the 'Breast Crawl”.

CURRENT SCENARIO

Recently in 2007, in the Nandurbar District of India, a group of caregivers and community volunteers witnessed a demonstration of a newborn performing a breast crawl. After the demonstration, the caregivers were so impressed with the technique that they decided to make the method a part of their routine. “It was an amazing experience, not only for me and the parents but also the entire staff,” said Dr. Prashant Gangal of the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India.³

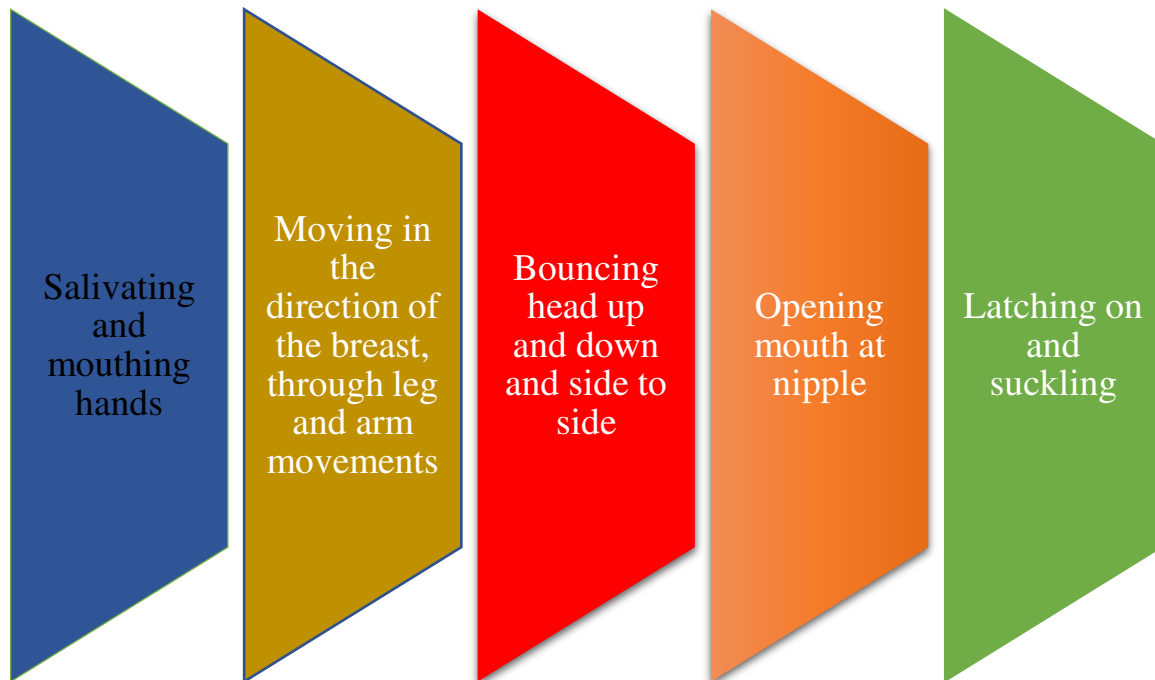
The biggest advantage of this method, according to Dr. Gangal, is that it ensures better mother-infant bonding, an immeasurable long-term benefit for both mother and child. “It helps to keep the baby warm,” “The baby starts getting colostrums, which have high concentration of antibodies. This offers protection against infections and is important for the baby’s survival. Breast crawl helps uterine contraction and faster expulsion of the placenta, reduces maternal blood loss and prevents anaemia.”³

Contrary to the belief that a newborn is not able to do anything on his or her own, the baby is alert soon after birth,” says UNICEF Child Development and Nutrition Officer Rajlakshmi Nair. “Soon after delivery, breastfeeding can be initiated. Breast crawl is a simple method to achieve this.” In order to advance this initiative, the UNICEF India office in Maharashtra has partnered with various state and public health institutions such as the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India, among others. UNICEF is also supporting a programme to train government and NGO service providers on the basics of infant and young child nutrition. An instructional film that captures the live process of the breast crawl, with specifics on each step, is being distributed.³

As soon as your baby is born, place him skin-to-skin on your chest. Make sure that you are semi-reclined or laid back (a “biological nurturing” position). Allow your body to support your baby and use your hands and arms to ensure that your baby doesn’t roll off your chest. Be sure to touch your baby and stroke him gently, but know that with the breast crawl, your baby moves toward the breast on his own—powered by a newborn stepping instinct.⁴

Women who experience a cesarean birth (c-section) can still use a modified version of the breast crawl. Simply place your baby head first at the top of your chest in an over-the-shoulder position. Ask your partner or nurse to support your baby as he makes his way down your chest to your breast.⁴

In 1998, neonatologist Marshall Klaus identified a five-part sequence of events in the breast crawl:



A dozen years later, maternal-child researcher Kerstin HedbergNyqvist, RN, PhD, wrote more broadly about the breast crawl as an element of skin-to-skin care (also called “kangaroo care”) in the period immediately following childbirth. She distinguished between pre-feeding behaviours and feeding behaviours, noting that newborns exhibit: ⁴

- The birth cry
- Relaxation
- Awakening
- Crawling breast preparation (fist kneading and head bouncing)
- Latch and suckling

American Academy of Paediatrics (AAP) recommends “direct skin-to-skin contact immediately after delivery until the first feeding is accomplished.” It is also to be “encouraged throughout the postpartum period.” Importantly, the newborn reflexes that

support the breast crawl persist for at least the first 30 days of the child's life and are triggered by a prone position (face down) on the chest of the semi-reclined mother.⁴

ADVANTAGES

BABY	MOTHER	BOTH
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warmth• Comfort• Metabolic adaptation• Qyality of attachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expulsion of placenta• Reduction of postpartum hemorrhage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bonding

CONCLUSION

Breastcrawl results in positive shortterm breastfeeding outcome. It is simple and cost effective method. Nurses can incorporate this practice and thus initiate the bond of motherhood. Breast crawl should be given to all the new born immediately after birth. The newborns who received breast crawl achieved early establishment of breastfeeding and more the weight of the newborn better the breast crawl.

REFERENCES

- 1.. Marchlewska-Koj, Anna; Lepri, John J.; Müller-Schwarze, Dietland (2012-12-06). *Chemical Signals in Vertebrates 9*. Springer Science & Business Media. p. 419.
- 2.Desai, Daftary& (2008-01-01). *Selected Topics in Obstetrics and Gynaecology-4: For Postgraduate and Practitioners*. BI Publications Pvt Ltd. p. 281.

3.www.unicef.org

4.<https://babygooroo.com>

5.www.breastcrawl.org