Initiating Early Post-Cesarean Feedings is Best Practice!

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Recommended Citation  
Fellin, Lisa; Hutton, Sherry; and Kenyon, Cindy, "Initiating Early Post-Cesarean Feedings is Best Practice!" (2016). *All Nursing Boot Camp Posters*. 39.  

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Initiating Early Post-Cesarean Feedings is Best Practice!

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Purpose
To use evidence based practice to guide patient driven diet progression immediately following cesarean surgery.

PICOT
In Postpartum cesarean patients, how does advancing diet per patient preference, compare to advancing diet per nurse preference affect patient satisfaction using a likert scale, at time of discharge.

Background
Providence St. Vincent Medical Center delivers 4300 newborns per year and has a level three NICU. This work occurred on the Mother Baby Unit (MBU) & Postpartum Specialty Care Unit (PSCU), the postpartum units to which most moms are admitted post-delivery.

A review of literature recommends early initiation of oral feeding is safe for patients following a cesarean delivery. The evidence indicates that when patients autonomously advance their own diet following a cesarean delivery to general food within 4-8 hours of surgery (providing the patient is tolerating liquids first) is best practice and safe. Advancing the diet “Early” can lead to:

- Faster return of bowel function, less gas distension and faster return of a bowel movement
- Quicker patient ambulation
- Decreased length of stay, thus reducing medical costs
- Earlier breastfeeding
- Increased patient satisfaction
- Decreased pain medication

Advancing the diet “early” has no effect or increase on levels of nausea and no increased rate of an ileus

Baseline Assessment
Current diet progression/advancement practice on our unit is to advance the diet from NPO, Clear liquids, Full liquids and finally to a General diet once nurses feel their patients are ready. “Ready” is loosely defined as the presence of bowel tones and/or flatus. Some nurses do advance diet earlier than others and this sets the stage for inconsistent practices.

Evidence based practice supports patients using their own discretion as they advance their diet.

Intervention
Following a cesarean delivery, patients were randomly assigned into 2 groups.

- The Nurse directed feeding progression: Nurse to advance diet as tolerated per her recommendations.
- The Patient directed feeding progression: Patient to advance diet as tolerated per their recommendations.

The evidence based project was similar to those found in the literature. Advancing the diet “Early” did not have an impact on nausea symptoms. When patients were able to advance their diet autonomously following a cesarean delivery, they ate sooner and experienced a more satisfying recovery. Most of the patients who advanced their own diet felt they ate at the right time.

Results
There was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of presence or duration of nausea. 32% of the nurse driven group reported that they ate too early or too late vs. 18% of the patient group who stated they ate too early or late (p=11). See Figure 1.

When patients guided their own eating progression they were 3 times more likely to eat within 8 hours of their cesarean vs. the nurse directed group (52% of patient driven vs. 16% of nurse driven; p=0.006). Individuals in the patient group (61%) were significantly more likely to report being very satisfied (giving a score of 5) when guiding their own eating progression after surgery vs. patients in the nurse group (32%; p=0.004).

Figure 1. Important Questionnaire Findings

<table>
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<th>Percentage of Patients</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
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</thead>
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<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Directed</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Time to Diet Advancement

Comments taken from the patient-directed feeding progression surveys:

- “I listened to my body and did what was best.”
- “I had not eaten since 9 am and was starving so being able to eat was wonderful.”
- “I was hungry and I could eat!”
- “I threw up during surgery but afterwards I felt fine. I was able to eat what I wanted when I wanted and appreciated it.”

Conclusion and Next Steps
Results of this evidence-based project were similar to those found in the literature. Advancing the diet “Early” did not have an impact on nausea symptoms. When patients were able to advance their diet autonomously following a cesarean delivery, they ate sooner and experienced a more satisfying recovery. Most of the patients who advanced their own diet felt they ate at the right time.

The next step of action will be to recommend applying this best practice initiative on our MBU & PSCU units. The authors will be teaching a 1.0 CEU class and proposing that EPIC automatically convert patients’ diets to general immediately following cesarean surgery.

References


