

Weaning your Baby / Fear

Tammy: I often used to wish new babies came with their own instruction booklet.

Carol: Oh I bet all new mothers wished that.

Tammy: There are so many things she needs to know..

Carol: Like what to feed them, when they need sleep,

Tammy: how to keep them healthy...

Carol: But, you know, our babies survived and grew up in spite of us.

Tammy: No doubt about it, babies are pretty tough!

Carol: Welcome to *Women of Hope*.

Tammy: Hello, how are you today? Carol and I are so happy to with you again.

Carol: As you can guess, we are talking about babies and all there was to learn. Yes, Tammy and I managed to feed and raise our own babies, but when we share advice with you we like make sure we talk to the people that know best; because there are always new ways and improvements in medicine and care. So in this case, we asked the nurses who care for babies, to make sure we have the latest. So you might find this interesting, whether you have your own children, or hope to have them one day, or you know mothers with babies or you care for someone's baby.

Tammy: The advice we got was not too different to what we did with our babies. Everyone agrees that 'breast is best', for babies, and if you can breastfeed, that's good. It gives your baby a good start in life. But if for some reason you can't and you are using a bottle with formula, we have some advice for you too. Remember no matter how you are feeding your baby feeding time gives you lots of cuddle time too.

Carol: Maybe your newborn baby is feeding and seems happy but you may be wondering... When should I start to feed my baby solid food? And you may be hearing different things from different people. So let me tell you what our expert said.

For the first four months, breast milk alone is the best food for the baby. It has all the right nutrients in the right amounts and protects your baby from some diseases. If you do need to bottle feed, be sure to mix the formula according to the instructions for the age of your baby, and mix it with boiled water

that has been allowed to cool down and is just a little bit warm. And be sure to choose a formula that states it is suitable for babies from birth to one year.

Tammy: Mothers often ask if they can give their babies ordinary cows' milk. If you simply can't breastfeed or buy proper baby formula you can use boiled and diluted goats' milk, cows' milk or soy milk, but you really should ask your health worker to explain what to add to make it more suitable for your baby.

Carol: That's right. Cow's milk is *not* the right main milk drink to give to babies. It has too much protein, salt and minerals, and not enough vitamins or iron. And cow's milk has large fat globules. It can be hard for your baby to digest. And if it is your baby's main food it can cause some health problems, such as low iron levels in their blood. Ordinary cows' milk could make your baby quite sick.

Tammy: So, just milk for the first four months, and breast milk is best.

The nurse said that when the baby is about 4 months old you can start to give a little cereal and diluted juice, while continuing to breastfeed.

Carol: Dilute the juice and again, with water that has been boiled and cooled. The cereal can be rice, wheat or other grain, cooked and mashed. Or you can buy baby cereal. Mix a couple of spoons of the cereal with a little cooled boiled water, or breast milk, or formula, and spoon feed it to your baby. Another fun way is to wash your hands well, dip a finger into the cereal, and let baby suck your finger to get used to the taste.

Tammy: Never put the cereal in a bottle. After a couple of months of giving breast milk or formula, cereal and juice, you should begin to add some mashed vegetables and fruits to your baby's diet. Add only one new food at a time.

Carol: You might wonder why you only add one food at a time to a baby's diet. Well, that's to make sure the baby isn't allergic to that food. If they start to vomit, or get diarrhea, or a rash, or seem to be in pain, try stopping the new food and see if the problem stops. After about 5 days of the new food, if your baby has no problem with that food, you may try adding another food. Start with cereal first, then diluted juice, then mashed fruits and cooked vegetables, adding one new food at a time.

Tammy: At about eight to ten months your baby's stomach is ready to try some foods that contain *protein*. Your baby will be growing fast and needs protein foods to make the cells of the body. By the time your baby is one year old, the protein in the milk is not enough to meet their needs. They must get extra protein from other foods.

Carol : And protein is found in foods from animals, such as meat, chicken, fish, eggs, cheese, and yoghurt. There are plant proteins too – like peas and beans, soybeans, tofu, and nuts. And many protein foods also have *iron* and that's another very important reason to start these foods. Both protein and iron make your baby's blood strong. The baby is born with iron supplies from the mother, but that iron has been used up by this age and your baby needs to get iron from food.

Tammy: OK, so when they are 8-10 months old you should continue to feed your baby breast milk or formula, fruits and vegetables and also start to give protein foods. You can offer the food chopped rather than mashed. Babies need to eat some food four or five times a day, because they have small stomachs.

Carol: Again, remember to give each new food for about 5 days before trying another one. Be especially careful when you start eggs and anything with nuts in - just a *tiny* bit at first as some babies are allergic to them.

Tammy: Yes, and nuts can get caught in their throat, so be sure nuts are ground up into a smooth paste and let the baby suck a little from your finger.

Carol: By the time your baby is a year old, they should be eating a variety of foods and can eat almost anything you're eating. You don't have to buy expensive baby foods, just make sure their food is clean and fresh and easy to eat. You can start giving cows' or goats' milk when the child is about a year old, but remember to boil it first if you're not sure it's safe and clean.

Tammy: You can begin by mixing the milk with already-made formula. Start by making a quarter of the drink cows' milk, then the next week make half of it cows' milk, and the following week make it three-quarters, and then full cream milk. Many people say that goats' milk is safer, better and easier to digest than cows' milk. And some babies are allergic to something in cows' milk so goats' milk suits them better.

Carol: Babies often need extra fluid, especially in hot weather. Water is best - but make sure it's clean. That's why we often tell you to boil the water first. Once it is cooled the water is safe to drink from a clean bottle or from a teaspoon. Don't give sweet fizzy drinks, or sweetened fruit juice. It's better if your child doesn't get used to all that extra sugar because it's not really good for them.

Tammy: Here's another thing - it's not good to give honey to young babies, as it could be contaminated. In some places honey has toxins from the plants that the bees feed on.

Carol: And when you prepare their food, be careful to cut it up into very small pieces and remove tiny bones or seeds. As babies grow, it's good for them to feed themselves as much as possible. It helps their development - though they often make quite a mess, don't they!

Well, we just talked about a lot. So let's make sure we've got it all clear. We should start giving babies other foods besides milk at about four months of age.

Tammy: And some of those 'first foods' are cereal and fruit juice with water added. Then at around six months we can start giving them cooked vegetables and fruits.

Carol: The next addition to the baby's diet is after they turn 8 months old. That's when we should start giving protein foods.

Tammy: And protein foods come from two sources. There is the animal protein like meat, fish, chicken, eggs, yoghurt, and cheese.

Carol: And protein that comes from plants like beans, nuts, and soybeans. We all need to eat some protein every day if possible, but growing children need it especially. And little girls need to be fed just well as boys.

Tammy: I think one of the most important things the baby health nurse said we should do was to start only one new food at a time, and watch the baby for five days to see if there are any problems, like vomiting, diarrhea, pain or a rash.

Carol: Well, I hope this helps you to understand the best way to feed your precious baby in the first year of their life. We just want our little ones to be happy and healthy, don't we?

Tammy: Yes, we do. I have a question for you. Do you think you are brave? You know, a brave person isn't one who has no fears; no, they know the dangers, but they are able to do the right thing even if they are afraid. What makes a brave person able to *act* bravely? Well when I think of brave I think about a man named David in God's word, the Bible.

Carol: When David was a very young man, he looked after his father's sheep out in the rough places, and sometimes, because he knew how to play the harp, he would go to King Saul's court to play music for him. One day his father asked him to take some supplies to his older brothers who were in the army of the king. When David got there, he found that their enemies, the Philistines, were camped on one side of a valley, and their own army, the Israelites were on the other side, and neither side could move.

Tammy: The Philistines had a huge soldier called Goliath, far bigger and stronger than any of the Israelites, and every day he would come out in his armor and challenge them. 'Send out your best fighter. If he defeats me, we will surrender, but if I kill him, you will have to be our servants.' No-one wanted to fight him, because they were sure they would lose. Even King Saul was very frightened!

Carol: When David heard what was happening, he offered to fight Goliath. King Saul said, 'No, you can't possibly fight him. You're just a youth.'

'I've been looking after my father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a sheep, I went after it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me I grabbed it by its hair, struck it and killed it. This Philistine will be like them, because he has defied the armies of the true and living God. It was *the Lord* who rescued me from the lion and the bear, and he will rescue me from the Philistine.'

Tammy: That's why when I think of bravery, I think of David.

But *why* was he so brave? Because he trusted in God! God had rescued him when he was looking after the sheep. This bully, Goliath, was saying bad things about God and David knew that it was the right thing to stand up to him. David could see how big Goliath was, and I guess he knew it was very dangerous to fight him, but God gave him the courage. We can be brave when we really know God is with us.

Carol: David went out and told Goliath, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty who you have defied. The battle is the Lord's.'

And then he hurled a stone from his slingshot and hit Goliath in the forehead, and killed him. All the Philistines ran away! (1 Samuel 17)

Tammy said we can be brave when we know God is with us. Well, today Marli has joined us. She's here to give you some hope and encouragement during *your* times of fear. Welcome, Marli.

Marli: It's so good to be here with you today. Last time I was with you we talked about our minds. Our minds are a wonderful gift God has given us. The Bible says that God made us in His image. That means that we can think, learn, make judgments and choose things. We also said that our spiritual struggles happen in our minds, where we make decisions and choices every day. No wonder this is the place where Satan, the enemy of God and people, attacks us first, in our minds.

My dear friend, Satan wants to fill your mind with thoughts that don't match God's thoughts. We women tend to worry a lot, don't we? I know, because I come from a family of worriers. Most of the women in my family follow Jesus, but we can all worry. So, what can we do when we find we're starting to worry? We can pray, we can fight against bad thoughts, and we can fill our minds with true thoughts from God's Word, the Bible. It's good to check our thoughts so we can think like Jesus does. By reading the Bible we can know what Jesus did and said. That will help us to think like Jesus when we make decisions.

The other day I saw a pillow that had these words embroidered onto it, 'Call your Mom, she worries!' I laughed because it's so true! We mothers often do worry about their children - if they're going to succeed in life, about their health, about their school work, their behavior, their careers, their marriages, their faith, everything! Some women are paralyzed by fear; that's what fear can do. It can paralyze you! You're afraid to go places, afraid you may lose your job or that your husband will lose *his* job. You're afraid of the future, of the past. You're afraid of losing control over your life. Many women, who do not believe that God is their good heavenly Father, are afraid of God! They fear death and evil spirits. They fear their husbands are going to divorce or abandon them. They're afraid of getting cancer or AIDS or any other disease.

So often we just let our mind go where it wants to, and our thoughts control our emotions, the way we feel. To change the way we feel, we need to check our thoughts. The Bible tells us what to do: 'Let God change you from the inside by making your minds new'. (Romans 12:2) But how can we do that?

My friend, God's word tells us: 'Take every thought under control to make it obey Jesus Christ.' (2 Cor 10:5) We need to ask God to change us and give us new thoughts. That's the only way you will get rid of your fear and your anxieties. Listen carefully to the things you're telling yourself secretly in your mind, especially when you have hard times.

I want you to understand that you don't need to be paralyzed by fear. Let me read some words from the Bible to you. 'God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.' (2 Tim.1:7) God does not want us to be fearful.

King David wrote long ago: 'Even when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me.' (Psalm 23:4)

I've seen some women with cancer who were walking in the valley of the shadow of death, but without any fear. Why? Because of their faith! Their trust was in God. Listen to these words that David wrote: 'I called to the Lord and He answered me, and delivered me from ALL my fears.' (Psalm 34:4) He also wrote, 'When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. I put my trust in God; I shall not be afraid...' (Psalm 56:3) David was afraid sometimes, but he knew to trust God.

My dear friend, that is God's message for us today. In the Bible we read, 'Perfect love casts away fear...' (1 John 4:18)

God's love is the only perfect love. If you trust in Him, if you pray and fill your mind with God's words, your mind will become new. Your fears, anxieties and worries won't paralyze you any more. I want to pray for you now.

Dear God, You alone are perfect and show us perfect love. I ask You to come and cast away the fear that is paralyzing my dear friend today. Heal her soul; make her mind new. Answer her prayer and rescue her from all her fears. We ask for these blessings in the name of our Savior the Lord Jesus. Amen.

Carol: Amen. Friend, I have some words I'd like to read to you from the Bible. It says: 'But thanks be to God. He gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, stand firm. Let nothing move you.' (1 Cor 15:57)

Tammy: I can't believe that our time is already over for today.

Carol: Tammy, it always goes too quickly when we are with good friends.

Tammy: We really do enjoy spending this time with you. We look forward to hearing from you. Let us know how we can pray for you.

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