### STEPS IN SUPPORTING INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

For HCPs supporting pregnant women and family members

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<th>Steps in Supporting Informed Decision-Making</th>
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| Initiate a breastfeeding conversation early in pregnancy with open-ended questions and active listening:  
  - Encourage sharing of concerns  
  - Validate concerns  
  - Correct misconceptions |
  - What have you heard about breastfeeding? Tell me what you know.  
  - How have members of your family fed their babies?  
  - What do your family members think? How do you feel about that?  
  - I see why you feel that way. A lot of mothers would feel the same way.  
  - We used to think breastmilk substitute (formula) was the same as breastmilk, but now we know there are a lot of differences.  
  - You could have lots of breastmilk even if your mother didn’t.  
  - Sore nipples aren’t normal—you can get help so your nipples don’t hurt. |
| Explain the process of informed decision-making |
| Discuss the value of breastfeeding |
  - Breastfeeding gives babies the best nutrition and makes them healthier.  
  - If possible, babies should breastfeed exclusively for 6 months and keep breastfeeding until they are 2 years old or more.  
  - Any amount of breastfeeding improves health; the more, the better.  
  - Breastfeeding makes the mother healthier too. |
| Discuss the health consequences of not breastfeeding |
  - Did you know that when babies don’t breastfeed they are at increased risk for SIDS, ear infections, pneumonia, gastrointestinal infections, and diabetes?  
  - Premature babies are at increased risk of necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC).  
  - When mothers don’t breastfeed they have increased risk of premenopausal breast and ovarian cancer, as well as not losing their pregnancy weight. |
| Discuss the risks and costs of feeding breastmilk substitute (formula) |
  - Breastmilk substitute (formula) is quite expensive—would that be a problem?  
  - Sometimes there are errors when breastmilk substitute (formula) is made in the factory and it has to be recalled. Powdered breastmilk substitute (formula) is not sterile, so it has to be made a certain way.  
  - Breastmilk substitute (formula) can easily be mixed wrong and must be made with safe water.  
  - Would you like to learn to prepare and use breastmilk substitute (formula) safely? |
| Difficulty of reversing your decision |
  - You should be aware that it is very hard to switch from bottle feeding to breastfeeding (but quite easy to switch from breast to bottle). |
| Consider breastfeeding barriers and supports |
  - What is the thing that would make it hardest for you to breastfeed? Is there any way to change that? What else might make it hard? Could that change?  
  - Who could support you to breastfeed? Would it help to make a plan for how you could get more support for breastfeeding? |
| Consider alternatives to full breastfeeding |
  - If you decide not to breastfeed, would you be willing to hold your baby skin-to-skin after birth? (All babies benefit from skin-to-skin contact.)  
  - If your baby is born prematurely, could you pump your milk to give to your baby?  
  - Would you be willing to try breastfeeding and see how it goes?  
  - How about combining breastfeeding with bottle feeding?  
  - Some mothers pump their milk and feed it to the baby in a bottle. Is that an option? |
| Keep the doors (and options) open |
  - You don’t have to decide right away. Take your time and think about it.  
  - Would you like to take a breastfeeding class to learn more?  
  - Would you like to learn about breastmilk substitute (formula) feeding?  
  - If you have any questions, you can contact me . . . |