



Natural Infant Formula Alternatives & Beast Feeding Tips

With Dr. Martin Katz and Dr. John Gildea

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David Roberts ([00:03](#)):

Hey everybody. It's David Roberts, and you are listening to the Mara Labs Podcast. Today I have Dr. Martin Katz, and Dr. John Gildea, with me. And we're going to talk about a current topic in the news, that before I mention what it is, I'm going to read a couple of things, some things that are in this product, including rocket fuel, phthalates, melanin, higher levels of heavy metals, and genetically modified GMO materials, like soy, and canola oil.

David Roberts ([00:40](#)):

And if those things sound like substances you don't want to put in your body, I'm with you. And these are all things found in traditional, or conventional, rather, infant formula, which people use widely as a breastfeeding, breast milk replacement. And infant formula has been in the news, recently, as being not available. And there are some reasons for that, we won't go into. What I do want to go into, is looking at alternatives. What can people do, even when there's plenty of infant formula, conventional infant formula, available, what can people do to be healthy? And I know there are different views on this, and so I'm going to hand it over to John, and Martin, and you guys can decide who wants to go first.

Martin Katz ([01:40](#)):

You're good with me going first, John?

John Gildea ([01:43](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. Perfect.

Martin Katz ([01:43](#)):

Perfect. I think it's probably important to review why breast milk is so absolutely important. And even before that, again, going back to the delivery of the infant, and even prenatal care. Hopefully, mothers are doing what they need to do to ensure that they're healthy, getting enough rest, enough hydration, really healthy eating, staying away from GMO foods, eating as cleanly as possible, to support their health. And as they're moving towards delivery, what's amazing... And I think I only found this out a few years ago, it was maybe five years ago, was that the whole vaginal biome actually changes in anticipation of this baby going through the birth canal, which is just an amazing fact. And so this baby, hopefully gets to go through the birth canal, and start their microbiome health journey.

Martin Katz ([02:49](#)):

If a C-section is needed, the current dogma is to ask the OB-GYN to swab the vagina, and then use that swab into the nasal firings of the infant. Hopefully, they do seed some of that healthy microbiome, that they were not able to get, because they entered the world in a different method. But then, what we want after that is what we call, rooming in. The infant is with the mother, as much as possible. Hopefully, it's been an uneventful, healthy delivery, a lot of skin-to-skin contact, which will help increase breast production, breast milk production, excuse me, and the infant latches well, has a good feeding, and gets that essential colostrum, which again, is just filled with an unbelievable amount of goodness, for the child, entering into this world. Whether it's helping children fight infections, other essential nutrients that the child otherwise just cannot get.

Martin Katz ([03:55](#)):

Plus, there's lots to be said about skin-to-skin contact, and then the child is moving on. This breast milk and colostrum production is, ultimately, I think, what we're designed to do, and what's going to help your child enter the world, and be able to deal with what the world has to offer it, or not, in the best possible manner. Plus it's very inexpensive, and allows for a lot of mental health issues, as well. A lot of-

David Roberts ([04:28](#)):

And part of why-

Martin Katz ([04:28](#)):

Dopamine, and oxytocin, and all those wonderful hormones.

David Roberts ([04:32](#)):

Indeed, yes. And part of why... As far as you mentioned, brain, there's chemicals like oxytocin, but isn't... Breast milk also has a lot of different fats, that the brain needs. I read around a hundred, maybe slightly over a hundred, different types of fat.

Martin Katz ([04:59](#)):

Absolutely. And brain development, if you look at the way a baby is formed, how big the head is, compared to the rest of the body, and the development of the brain, compared to other parts, is rather remarkable. Providing this infant the fats, that are essential, is really difficult, and absolutely imperative. And so when you're looking formulas, as you point out, it's very difficult to copy that natural design of breast milk, and certainly of colostrum. And so, as much as they may try to get those fats, whether they're correct fats, the fats that are actually converted to the fats that are needed in the human body. Very, very difficult, and oftentimes, not completely accurate. I think John's going to talk a little bit about ways that may be able to afford you a little bit of leeway if you're having trouble with breast production, breast milk production.

Martin Katz ([06:02](#)):

And there are things that you can do to increase your breast milk production, including getting enough rest, eating healthy, skin-to-skin contact, making sure that the child has fed completely on one breast before moving to the other, breast pumping certain foods and nutrigenomics that you can do, to help increase breast milk production. There's things that you can do if that's not successful, and obviously not stress out. And so many parents come to me, just unbelievably stressed out, that they're not producing enough milk, which unfortunately gets in the way, of producing enough breast milk. But again, all those other things, rest, hydration, skin-to-skin contact, all the things that I've already mentioned, but if you're still struggling, or if your schedule is such that it makes it very difficult, I think there's probably other ways that are probably better to have some supplement-feeding, for your kids, and others.

David Roberts ([06:56](#)):

Yeah. And before we dive in there, hydration obviously key, but what do you encourage moms, breastfeeding moms, to eat?

Martin Katz ([07:07](#)):

Yeah. So again, extremely healthy foods, an adequate amount of fat, an adequate amount of protein. You're not going to be changing to a low-carb, or a high-fat, or a low-fat diet at this point, probably

actually, preferably, a low-carb diet, but certainly not a low-fat diet. And so it's essential that they are getting, at least I would say 30%, of their calories from fat, and healthy fats, adequate protein, and then certainly a good variety of vegetables and fruits.

David Roberts (07:45):

And so, I'm a mom, breastfeeding mom. Hey, Dr. Katz, "Fats, I don't know what foods I should be eating that have good fats. Can you give me some suggestions?"

Martin Katz (07:56):

Yeah. Again, pretty big fan of making sure that where you're getting you... If you are able to tolerate dairy, where you're getting your dairy from, raw or dairy, certainly not ultra-pasteurized. And if you're getting raw milk, it's not pasteurized at all. You need to make sure that this is a milk that has been ascertained to be of good quality, certain yogurts, kefir's. Olive oil's fantastic. And there are certain other fats, such as avocado oil, is fantastic. It also has some prebiotic in it. There's definitely healthy fats that come from plant-based, and obviously meat-based. If you're going to do meats, make sure it's organically raised, or at least grass-fed, which generally surpasses organic, pasteurized meats. And there's good places, certainly around here, and almost anywhere that I'm aware of, that you can get these things now. And there's that thing called the worldwide web, which you're able to get these things delivered to you.

David Roberts (09:07):

The internet.

Martin Katz (09:08):

The internet, exactly.

David Roberts (09:10):

I remember this distinctly, when right after Mara's first prenatal visit, about a week later, we got a... What's the brand, is it Similac-

Martin Katz (09:25):

Mm-hmm (affirmative) And promote Similac.

David Roberts (09:28):

Flyer in our mailbox, and I'm like, "How the hay did they know?" These big pharma company, or big Ag, industrial food complex companies, are tied in, and they're giving this... It was a beautiful flyer, but it was a soy-based infant formula.

Martin Katz (09:52):

Non-organic, soy-based.

David Roberts (09:54):

Non-organic, soy-based.

Martin Katz (09:56):

Which is almost certainly GMO.

David Roberts (09:57):

GMO, genetically modified with, laced with, small amounts of glyphosate. John, why is that bad, for an infant?

John Gildea (10:09):

Yeah. You think how important their first steps are, I love the description of that Martin had of, what does the first steps, a good version of that, look like? And I tend to see microbiome everywhere. And now that, I'm, kind of, in that mode of thinking, but there's prebiotic fiber in mother's milk, that is specifically used by particular components of the microbiome, in order to make butyrate, which is, another alternative energy source, that's needs to be combined with the simple sugars. And of course, mother's milk has the simple sugars in it also, but doesn't have all the sort of baggage that comes along with how normal sugar is made here.

John Gildea (11:08):

That beautiful combination of mother's milk, with also getting the classic microbiome component, is *B. Infantis*. That actually is... The reason it's so important, is that particular bacteria can metabolize the prebiotic fiber in mother's milk. And it's somewhere over 90% of babies are actually missing that *B. Infantis*, gut bacteria. And so, they're not really utilizing that prebiotic fiber that's in mother's milk, adequately. There's probably a million of those. That description that you're describing is really great because it's something that's been happening since the beginning of time, and that's what makes a baby flourish. In terms of, what are the alternatives out there for alternatives, to mother's milk? One of the few sources that I would trust on that issue is Mary Enig.

John Gildea (12:18):

She has joined with Sally Fallon on a book called Nourishing Traditions. And there's a section in there about making alternative mother's milk formula, and talk about the complexities of the fats. And Mary Enig is a fat expert. She's really on top of her game, for what you produce in there. And it's interesting that a component of it is eggs, and egg yolk, which is similar composition. It's what a small animal is to grow off of. And so, it would make sense that egg yolk would be a component of what would be in an alternative formula. So yeah, there's not too many sources out there that I would put my trust into, but Mary, if you read her work, you would understand that she was saying these things back when it was definitely not acceptable. And she was steadfast, and has been a component of a lot of people producing very healthy kids.

Martin Katz (13:28):

Yeah, and she talks about the importance of a specific type of cow. Again, this raw milk idea that has been certified. She also does talk about goat's milk. You need to be a little careful with goats milk, because there's certain things it's missing that you need to certainly replace. And so, she's a great source. And I think there's now podcasts that, sort of, go through the process with you, and help you sort of understand how complex it is, but how easy it can be made.

David Roberts (13:57):

And you've referred to raw milk. Is raw milk safe for babies?

Martin Katz ([14:03](#)):

I think it's not only safe, but actually preferable. And again, you need to make sure that the way you're getting it from is well-sourced. And again, clean, and all those important things. And there's websites that help point you in that direction.

David Roberts ([14:20](#)):

And why is it preferable in your mind?

Martin Katz ([14:23](#)):

Well, it's most closely related to a mother's milk, as far as the fat content, and the fat distribution. Goat's milk is higher in fat. It's got other amazing vitamins and the ones that I think it skips, is vitamin B12 and folate, if I remember correctly. But again, adding those in, will get you where you need to go with goat's milk, and you can get those sourced, as well, locally here, certainly around Charlottesville. And actually what's interesting about eggs, I think it's more, as far as a baby's first table food, is the egg yolk. I'm not sure that's so much in the formula, but phenomenal way to introduce babies to their first baby food, which can be quite early again, if you need to supplement that breastfeeding.

David Roberts ([15:09](#)):

Great, all right. Well, thank you gentlemen.

Martin Katz ([15:14](#)):

Thank you. Please take care of your humans, or your little humans.

John Gildea ([15:17](#)):

All right, bye.