



# Australasian Lactation Courses NEWSLETTER

PO Box 336 Unley SA 5061

Nov 2004

## AUSTRALASIAN LACTATION COURSES

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### Breastfeeding is best!

**Isn't it? Who could argue? As health professionals, lactation consultants and educators we are strongly committed to the promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding.**

#### Who are we?

Jen Byrne and Ellen McIntyre have been conducting the Australasian Lactation Courses both internally and externally since 1989. We have had more than 1800 midwives, doctors, child health nurses and other health professionals undertake this course over this time.

#### Jen

Jen is a lecturer in Midwifery at Flinders University and has been involved in developing and teaching in the inaugural 3 year Bachelor of Midwifery course. The students in the first cohort will be graduating at the end of 2004.

Jen has conducted her own business as a childbirth educator and lactation consultant in private practice for over 10 years and is a committee member of the Australian College of Midwives in SA.

Jen has a Masters degree and is currently undertaking her PhD at Flinders University in a midwifery related area. She has two children and lives in metropolitan Adelaide. Jen has always had a commitment to breastfeeding through her midwifery role and later as a breastfeeding mother. The opportunity to undertake the International Board Certified Lactation

Consultants (IBCLC) Exam in 1988 began the impetus to offer education on breastfeeding to interested health professionals.

#### Ellen

Ellen is a researcher, IBCLC (since 1989) and an Australian Breastfeeding Association Counsellor (since 1986). She is on the editorial review board for both Breastfeeding Review and Journal of Human Lactation and is the Chair of the International Lactation Education Accreditation Council (ILEAC).

Ellen completed her PhD at Adelaide University looking at environmental barriers to breastfeeding. She is currently working on several breastfeeding projects and is Senior Research Fellow in the Department of General Practice at Flinders University.

Ellen and her husband Allan have two sons and live on a small farm 40 kms out of Adelaide where they raise sheep.

#### When we started...

In 1988 Jen began our first course as an internal class with Trish Strachan another midwife. The following year Trish left Adelaide and Ellen joined Jen in conducting the course. Ellen's science background has been a welcome addition to Jen's midwifery background and both with counselling backgrounds has given the course a broad base of knowledge.

From our humble beginnings of a group of 10 keen participants in the first internal class in 1988, gradually, as midwives

and other health professionals heard about the course we developed a distance package.

We continue to conduct internal courses in metropolitan Adelaide. However, the majority of participants are from areas that are either remote, interstate or overseas. Over the years we have facilitated many education sessions and each year offer a Trial Exam in metropolitan Adelaide in preparation for those wishing to sit the IBCLC Exam.

#### The Lactation Course for Health Professionals

This course consists of 10 modules covering all areas identified in the International Lactation Consultants Examination.

Each module consists of study guide questions, multiple choice questions and case studies that give an variety of aspects for participants to respond. Students send their work (via post or email) to the course directors to re-view and provide feedback.

Participants have 7 months to complete the 10 modules. These can be undertaken at the individuals own pace and as we know, life experiences do get in the way, so extensions are readily available on request. Around 4 hours a week of study is required to complete the course in 7 months.

Each year we update the course (based in part on student evaluations) and add information about resources that become available.

*The advantages of breastfeeding are so incredibly persuasive, yet we are still finding our breastfeeding rates in Australia are well below the WHO Recommendations.*

*The ABS figures show 83% of babies are breastfed when first taken home from hospital. By 6 months 48% are being breastfed, by 1 year 23% , and at 2 years only 1% are still being breastfed.*

Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Breastfeeding in Australia*. Electronic Delivery <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nfs> accessed 15/9/04

*Health Professionals who work with new mothers and babies have an obligation to have a sound knowledge base in both the art and science of breastfeeding.*

### Who does the course?

The majority of participants in the past have been midwives, with child health nurses the next major group. Many doctors, general practitioners as well as obstetricians and pediatricians have undertaken the course in the past. Health professionals, including nutritionists, physiotherapists, speech pathologists and occupational health professionals have been students as well as a journalist and of course many Australian Breastfeeding Association Counsellors.

Over the years we have had many health professionals, generally midwives or nurses who have used the course as part of their University elective in Bachelor, Post Graduate or Masters degrees.

Health Departments in some states have funded staff to do this course as part of their Midwifery Enhancement Programs.

Participants who undertake the Australian Lactation Courses do so to update their knowledge in breastfeeding, gain CERPs, or undertake our course in preparation for the IBCLC exam. However, it is not necessary to be an exam candidate to register and undertake this course.

The International Board of Lactation Consultants Examiners (IBLCE) who administer the IBCLC exam, is independent of and not associated with, nor endorses, any particular lactation education course.

### The IBCLC exam

The IBCLC exam is held on the last Monday of July each year all over the world. It has been held in Australia since 1987. The exam consists of two sections with 200 multiple choice questions, some of them will be related to clinical photographs. There is an eligibility criteria to be met before the candidates can register to undertake the examination.

For more information, visit the IBLCE website [www.iblce.edu.au](http://www.iblce.edu.au) or contact:  
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What previous students have said...

*" I have found the course to be the most interesting and worthwhile study I have ever undertaken. Having so many books available for loan has allowed easy access to cross reference without financial burden.*

*Thank You. I would highly recommend this course to anyone interested in the well being of the newborn and toddler"*

*" A very worthwhile and useful course. It was very full on—a huge amount of reading and researching could have been done. At times I had to limit what I answered due to time constraints, but I plan to continue to use the course work to continue to read and research areas and build on my knowledge base"*

*"Well worth the effort, I really enjoyed the course and self directed time frame. Very well organised, great resources, useful feedback on answered questions. I would certainly recommend the course to anyone interested."*

*" This course should be mandatory for ALL midwives—I will be encouraging this in my hospital"*

### What other courses do we have?

#### **Breastfeeding Management Workshop**

The Breastfeeding Management Workshop is an 8 hour breastfeeding education package designed to help maternity units to provide breastfeeding education to their staff, particularly in readiness for those institutions wanting to work towards the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative accreditation.

The course can be conducted by the directors of ALC (Jen or Ellen) or if there is a member of staff who has good breastfeeding knowledge, or a Lactation Consultant, then they can work from the package in offering the 8 hour session. All the resources are included for lectures, interactive sessions and group discussion.

To date, we have conducted these workshops around Australia including Geraldton (WA), Maryborough & Horsham (Vic), Mt Barker (SA), and Broken Hill (NSW). Many other hospitals have purchased the package and conducted their own workshops.

#### **Breastfeeding and Lactation: multiple choice questions**

This package has been extremely useful for those preparing to sit (or resit) the IBCLC exam. Consisting of 130 questions, most based on colour photos, it includes answers with explanations and/or references.

**Note** these multiple choice questions are included in the Lactation Course for Health Professional's package.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

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