

The Spurrell Family Part 5: Wavey, Alan, and Mark

Wavey, Alan and Mark come to see you one week after Mark was born. Wavey is breastfeeding but having some problems. She is not sure if Mark is drinking enough and he is sleepy. Wavey's nipples are a little sore and are tender when Mark latches on, especially the left nipple. Mark is feeding well every 3-4 hours. Alan is very supportive; doing all the diaper changes, rocking Mark to sleep, and taking him for walks. You talk to them about the adjustments to having a new baby, breastfeeding and being new parents. They are exhausted but happy. The public health nurse visited and weighed Mark 3 days ago. He has regained his birth weight.

You examine Wavey as she breastfeeds Mark and realize that they are not achieving a good latch as they had while in hospital. You try different ways for Wavey to hold Mark to breastfeed. She finds the football hold to be the best position and feels it is more comfortable. In the meantime, Wavey and Mark will attend the breastfeeding support group in their neighborhood health center.

Wavey tells that she has been emotional and a bit tearful since discharge. She does not appear to be overtly depressed.

You examine Mark using the Rourke Baby Record. He is a very healthy one week old boy and is well nourished. He is very slightly jaundiced. Bowel movements and urination are all normal. You do a full physical exam and find no abnormalities. You recommend that Mark be given vitamin D drops.

You examine Wavey. On breast examination they are a bit red but generally normal. Abdominal exam shows a normal involuting uterus, with normal lochia.

You counsel her about having the Baby Blues and returning if they get worse, you reassure Wavey and Alan that they are doing a good job, and that you will see them again at their one month check.

One month check

Mark is growing very well. Wavey and Mark have been attending weekly breastfeeding support group sessions. The nurses weigh Mark each visit and always tell Wavey how handsome he is. Wavey is feeling very tired and worn out. Alan has been away for the past two and a half weeks. She has had some help from her family, with visits from her parents who take Mark out for walks. However, she is still tired, a little lonely, and she misses Alan a great deal. Since she has been on maternity leave, she has had very little interaction with friends and colleagues.

Breastfeeding is going well, but Wavey's mother is trying to convince Wavey to give Mark formula to supplement the breastfeeding. Her mother feels that if Wavey were to do that, that Wavey's mother would be able to give her a real break as Wavey is breastfeeding every four hours including overnight.

Wavey can't wait for Alan to return. She knows he will support her in exclusively breastfeeding Mark. They had talked about this a lot, and both felt strongly about breastfeeding as long as possible. Wavey says Alan has called every day since he left, sends frequent emails and they have been on Skype. Alan is missing his new family and is very anxious to return home on the weekend.

You examine Mark using the Rourke Baby Record. He is growing very well. There is no jaundice. His weight puts him at the 50th percentile, as well as height and head circumference. The rest of his physical exam is normal. They will continue with exclusively breastfeeding and attending the weekly support group sessions. You provide support for Wavey. You also examine her, doing a breast exam and pap smear, pelvic exam. She is healthy.

Two month check

You see Wavey, Alan and Mark. They have adjusted well to their new schedule. Mark is growing and thriving and Wavey is doing very well. Alan is a great help to them. Mark now sleeps 5-6 hours in a row overnight and is very pleasant.

He had his visit with the public health nurse for his check and had his first immunizations.

Wavey continues breastfeeding confidently. Alan's mother feels that the baby is hungry, that Wavey is spending all her time breastfeeding, and she wonders if some solid food should be introduced.

They are very proud parents. Mark's physical exam is normal. He continues to grow on the 50th percentile for weight, height and head circumference.

Wavey wonders at what point she could return to some substitute teaching which would get her out of the house and provide more interaction with others.

You make plans to see them again at various intervals (e.g. 4, 6, 18 months), inform that you would like to do a routine infant/child health assessment at 2-3 years and 4-5 years, and encourage them to call if there are any concerns or problems in the meantime.