BREASTFEEDING AND EATING DISORDERS

Effects of the eating disorder on breastfeeding

For the mother:

- Breast-feeding with a low maternal bone mineral density may lead to increased risk of fracture due to osteoporosis. Poor maternal nutrition, especially energy, fat, calcium, iron and zinc, may affect breast milk constituents.
- Increased tiredness and lethargy due to biochemical derangement & the effects of postural hypotension and fainting while holding the baby.
- Interference with the mother’s ability to detect satiety and hunger in her infant.
- Limitation of feeds to prevent the infant becoming “fat”; inappropriate concerns about the infant weighing too much.
- Prolonged exclusive breast-feeding to prevent infant from becoming “fat”.
- Use of extended breast-feeding combined with mother's food restriction to increase her post partum weight loss.
- Less facilitating, more intrusive and conflicted feeding, and increased expression of negative emotion toward infant.
- Rigid, nonsensical beliefs about feeding the infant.
- Spurious diagnoses of allergy or other reactions to milk components.

For the infant:

- Failure to thrive