



# Bettina Kraus

## Midwife and breastfeeding expert St. Josephs Hospital, Berlin

### Biography

Bettina Kraus is a midwife and lactation consultant living in Berlin. She has been working in the obstetric department of St. Josephs Hospital for 6 years now. Besides her daily routine in the maternity ward supporting mothers with early breastfeeding problems, she is also responsible for the walk-in-clinic for breastfeeding. Bettina assists the St. Joseph's quality management team and is involved in the hospital's certifications management.

During the International breastfeeding week, Bettina organizes special events and is involved in other public relations activities. She regularly gives training for St. Joseph's staff as well as offering informative meetings for soon-to-be parents. In St. Joseph's hospital she is closely connected with her colleague from the pediatrics clinic which includes specialized work for the NICU.

Bettina is also a Study Nurse. Her special interest is in diabetes and the effects of antenatal breastmilk expression. She educates pregnant women with diabetes on how to collect colostrum in advance during the last weeks of pregnancy, giving it to the newborns, lowering their risk of hypoglycemia. Another interest of hers is the effect of a C-section on breastfeeding and considering what is the best care method for women who have had one.

Before her time at St. Joseph's she was working as a self-employed midwife in her community. In this culturally diverse setting she worked with lower income mothers and also underaged mothers.

## Lactation support in the community

Bettina Kraus's presentation will cover most common breastfeeding problems during the first days after birth including difficulties with attachment of the baby to breast, sore nipples, lack of or limited amounts of milk forcing the need of formula supplement as well as heavy or painful engorgement.

She will answer questions such as: Which factors influence a good breastfeeding start? What difficulties can be experienced at the beginning of breastfeeding? How could bonding and breastfeeding fit in clinic's routines?

She will give a glimpse into how the St. Joseph Hospital in Berlin focuses on supporting bonding and breastfeeding for mother and child, for instance the NICU has 18 rooming-in-beds where mothers (and/or fathers) can stay with their child and become more involved in their care. The St. Joseph Hospital is an A-Level Perinatal Center with over 4000 deliveries per year.

In St. Joseph Hospital there are more than 40 standard operating procedures about breastfeeding management. This guarantees the same level of knowledge for staff in their daily work. The staff are also trained. They use in-house collected data (in their practice) concerning the start of breastfeeding after C-section and teach the benefits of pre-birth expression of colostrum from diabetic mothers to prevent/reduce risk of hypoglycaemia.

Postnatal care in the home is done by selfemployed midwives and is financed by the German health insurance system. Midwives usually visit the families during the first eight weeks or longer if there are breastfeeding problems or if the baby was born preterm or if the birth was with twins.

If any follow up care is needed, what help is available?

There are different types of support offered out there such as a new project called "Baby-Lotse" or Baby/Family-Navigator, specially trained family-midwives, lactation consultants and breastfeeding meetups are made available for those in need.

And what kind of governmental support is there for mothers and pregnant women? There is a law in Germany specifically protecting these women with parental financial support, work-rules and the option of paid parental leave.

Looking at this amount of offers, there is still the question coming up: Does all this help to increase the rate of breastfeeding women?