

Dr. Nancy: Good afternoon everybody, it's Dr. Nancy live, on Wednesday at lunch. Excited, we had a little technical difficulty this morning, but we got over it again, so we're coming to you live. Before we get started, I kind of want to talk about something that we're going to be doing in May. It's May 18th, and we're going to be doing a clothing swap. This is gonna be a way for you to get in, oh, maybe 10 pieces of clothing, new wardrobe, without having to spend any money. All you have to do is bring 10 pieces of clothing from your closet, that are clean and fairly good condition. And then you'll swap with some other ladies that have the same.

Dr. Nancy: So from 9 to 11, we're gonna do women in sizes small to extra large, and we'll also allow maternity clothes to come in. And then from 11 until 1, we're gonna do clothing exchange for kids. So, that'll be from newborn to size 6. So if you wanna participate, we have an event on our Facebook page. We are limited on what we can offer, so make sure you get your tickets early so you can save your spot. Anyway, join us for our clothing exchange on May 8th, and then like, comment, share if you like this video today. It's got some great information, and we're going to be talking about baby wearing. So, Amanda, this is Amanda Lens. And she is the president of baby wearing, she'll tell you about herself, so go ahead Amanda.

Amanda: Hi, so I'm the president of Central Indiana Baby Wearers Incorporated. We were originally a chapter of the National Organization Baby Wearing International. They are now defunked, they filed bankruptcy last year, so we decided we wanted to continue our mission here in central Indiana, so we filed and became a 501C3 last fall. So we are now our own entity. We exist, like I said I'm the president and also a volunteer baby wearing educator. So I've been doing this for about, let's see, I've been educating now for about four years, I've been baby wearing for about five, since my daughter was born and has gone through the gamut, all of the baby wearing stuff. I've really enjoyed volunteering for the organization. It's an all volunteer run group, our mission is really just to promote baby wearing as a universally accepted practice. There's benefits for both child and caregiver and we wanna make sure that everyone knows about them.

Dr. Nancy: Right.

Amanda: We provide education, obviously we have two monthly meetings that people are able to attend. And then we do events all over central Indian; anytime we hear something like - we've been to Indy Mommy market, we've done the big latch on, usually the one on the far west side is the one we've attended. We've done the great diaper change, or great cloth diaper change. Just any little events that we can attend and things that are parent or, caregiver and child focused are things that we're really trying to get, or have a presence at so that we can share the baby wearing love. Let's see what else, what do I want to say here.

Amanda: Basically, we serve everyone, anybody who wants to wear a child, whether they're the primary caregiver or not, is welcome to come to our meetings and learn about baby wearing. We have four right now, volunteer baby wearing educators, and then we have a core group of volunteers that can help answer questions about just about anything. We have our two meetings every month. We have a west side meeting, the first

Saturday of every month, so we actually have one coming up this Saturday, that's at Krannert Park on South High School Road, and that is a morning meeting, so it runs from 10 to 12 in the morning. And then we have a north east side meeting up in Fisher, the Hamilton East public library. And that one is a weeknight, it's from 6 to 8, and the day of the week varies just because we have library room availability to contend with. But our events are always posted on both our Facebook page with I think the URL will be provided.

Amanda: And then we also have a Facebook resource group, a chatter group, where people can come and participate and learn about baby wearing. So benefits of baby wearing, I want to talk about that just a little bit. I have this whole presentation I put together to do a kind of intro. We do an intro event quarterly, that's also gonna be held at Krannert Park. I think our first one is coming up on June. But we talk a lot about the benefits of baby wearing, why should I baby wear? People are not sure about it these days, is it just a trend, is it a fad? People have been wearing their babies, in many cultures for many years, and we've sort of adopted it and westernized it. But basically, babies who are born are happy babies. It reduces infant crying, there have been studies published in medical journals that talk about, baby wearing for 3 hours a day can reduce infant crying by about 43% overall. And that's kind of important, especially in those early stages.

Amanda: I started baby wearing because as a single mom, I work full time outside the home, and I was gonna have to come home and take care of my baby. I wanted a way to reconnect, and she was a little bit colicky in those early few weeks and months, and it just made a huge difference to our relationship. It can also make for healthier babies, especially for compromise infants, baby wearing, keeping them close, we talk about kangaroo care a lot in sort of neonatal circles and just baby wearing, wearing them close, keeps, gives them ability to regulate their own physical responses. It's just a really nice way to keep them close and help them with that. It can also make parents and caregivers more confident. I know it did that for me. It sort of sets up a cycle of positive interaction and helps to deepen that attachment with the baby. And especially, for non primary caregivers, like grandparents or the person who isn't home with the baby all day long, may not, just gives them a little bit more opportunity to have that close attachment that they might otherwise get to have; just offers that bonding opportunity.

Amanda: And then, oh especially, we talk a little bit and we talk about this kind of in our educational meetings, we had a lot of moms that come that may be suffering from postpartum depression or postpartum anxiety. Keeping the baby close and becoming that finally attuned, may help to build their confidence, right, and it gives them the baby right here, you're sort of learning, oh my baby is, this expression means that they want this, it just helps them to understand how babies may be expressing their needs a little bit better. Just reduces that risk for those moms of not feeling as confident as they could. Switching pages here...

Amanda: The other big benefit to it obviously, is it gives you a little bit of hands free opportunity especially if you've got multiple kids. It's a lot easier to care for your older children, chase after them at the playground whatever, if you've got baby on you, right if you're not trying to contend with a stroller, or holding a toddler's hand while your older child is

running away. You can more easily accomplish household tasks and things like that. Climbing stairs, is a lot more safer and easier, you can move around in crowds a lot safer and easier. It's just, it's just nice for those reasons I think.

Amanda: There's really not anywhere you can't go. I mean there's lots of places where it's hard to take a stroller, or a wagon, but wearing is just much easier. We teach primarily, there's about 5 or 6 different carrier styles that we tend to teach, sort of the basic carrier styles. So we teach, soft structure carriers, those are things like a Tula, or ErgoBaby or Lillebaby is another popular brand. So we have a lot of those, we actually have a learning and lending library available at our educational meetings. We have a wide variety of all kinds of carriers. But soft structure carriers are one of the most popular, because they are pretty simple, in that, they are, it's kind of the backpack style. We also have and teach woven wraps, so those are the big, long - we refer to it as a simple piece of cloth, but they can be anywhere from a yard or two a fabric, to 6 or 7 yards of fabric. It just depends on the length and what you want to do with it. We can certainly teach people how to do that.

Amanda: We also teach Asian style carriers, so carriers very[inaudible 00:09:23] or an Onbuhimo is another Asian style carrier that we teach, just a little bit different styles, things that people might not be exposed to outside of the baby wearing sort of community, but there are really neat options available. A Meitei is like a square panel with long shoulder straps and two waist straps. So it's really very simple to use, but it's not one that is widely, like I don't see them out and about. People who are baby wearing I might see wear them, but they aren't widely available, you just don't see them unless you're kind of apart of the community or have come to a meeting and learned how to use one.

Dr. Nancy: Okay.

Amanda: Onbuhimo is a Japanese style carrier, it's one that's really meant for a high back carry for an older infant or older child and it has no waist, so it's really just a panel with a couple of straps, shoulder straps, it's a little bit newer, it's gaining in popularity I would say, within the baby wearing community, it's something that we have people come and try out because it's definitely not for everyone, they way that it distributes the weight is different than say, a soft structured carrier that has a waist band to help distribute the weight across your hips. With the Onbuhimo you don't get that, and so it's just a little different style. Ringslings are incredibly popular, they're great for newborn through toddler, and sometimes my five year old still goes up in a ringsling, she still occasionally wants to be cuddled close to mom, and so she'll ask if we can, if she can go up in one of her favorite ringslings. Yeah, it's a really great option, it's nice, even for big kids to be able to do it once in awhile.

Amanda: There are lots of safety concerns of course with baby wearing, you always wanna make sure the baby is safe. Most carrier styles I think today, are now regulated by industry standards. They all have to have the big safety tag on them and they all have to be tested to weight limits and tested for safety. So that's actually a really good thing, it makes us feel good about the companies that manufacture the carriers, it makes us feel

good about making recommendations, so we're kind of happy about that for the most part.

Amanda: We look for things for carriers to support the baby in an upright position, we want to make sure the baby is high enough on the caregiver or wearer's body, so then we can monitor their breathing and make sure their chin is off their chest. Infants have really tiny airways, we wanna make sure that airway is never compromised while they're being worn. We want to make sure that their, kept in an ergonomic position, I keep doing this like I'm holding a baby, I'm trying to (laughs). I do this at meetings all the time when I'm teaching. We want to make sure their knees are higher than their bottom, we're looking for kind of, an M shape where the bottom of the M and the knees are up here. We want kind of a hammock seat, when you sit in a hammock, your bottom kind of sinks lower than your knees, that's really what we're looking for, with a good ergonomic position in a carrier.

Amanda: And that just helps to support proper development of the spine, and it helps to support good development of the hips as well. Those are things that we look for in a good ergonomic carrier. We really recommend purchasing a carrier from a reputable company to ensure that it does meet all those safety standards that I was talking about earlier. There's lots of knockoffs online, that people sell, especially soft structured carries for some reason. There's lots of kind of, off brands on Amazon or Zulily even, occasionally they'll pop up there. You'll find fake ergos in consignment shops occasionally. We just want to make sure that when that happens, if you ever have a question about whether or not your carrier is a legitimate carrier, you can certainly always post in our resource group and we'll be happy to help you figure that out, but it's also easy to just contact the manufacturer and ask for their safety information, especially if there's no tag. Lots and lots of options out there for who to buy from and what kind of carrier to buy.

Amanda: One of the things that we recommend people think about when they're gonna purchase a carrier, is what do you want to do with your carrier. How do you plan to wear? Do you just plan to wear around the house? Are you looking to wear while you're out at the grocery store? Are you gonna wear all day long, to go hiking? What kind of activities do you expect to be able to do. And that really helps us to give some guidance about the right style of carrier for you. There are activities where baby wearing is really not recommended, it's a big safety issue. Any activity where the manufacturer or any other governing body recommends that safety wear is needed for the person who is wearing, things like, mowing the lawn. If you think about the lawn mower manufacturers actually recommend that you wear ear protection, and eye protection and long pants and things like that. So lawn mowing is not really the best activity to be doing while you're baby wearing. Things like boating is another one, in Indiana, the state law requires that every person on a boat wears a safety vest, life vest, if you can't wear your baby with a life vest in the carrier, which you probably can't, it's really not an activity where you should be baby wearing.

Amanda: Driving obviously, is another one. And then bicycling is another one that we really don't recommend, simply because baby wearing can throw off your sense of balance a little

bit. All it takes is for an older child or a toddler that you're wearing on your back to shift, and then your balance shifts and it makes a big difference when you're bicycling. So we recommend that if you want to bicycle with your child, that you use a trailer or an appropriate seat that's made for that. So that's kind of our safety guidelines, those are the things that we talk about with people when talking about baby wearing.

Dr. Nancy: We have our number one baby wearer here with us, hi Cassandra.

Amanda: Oh hi!

Dr. Nancy: She's heard all of this before, she's the baby wearing queen.

Amanda: She's actually one of our volunteer baby wearing educators.

Dr. Nancy: Oh, that's awesome.

Amanda: She's one of our four.

Amanda: So we get a lot of frequently asked questions in our Facebook group and I thought I would share some of them, just a couple. So one of the first ones we get is, how early can I start wearing, we'll get a lot of expected moms, that want to know, when after the baby is born can I start wearing? We recommend starting to look at carriers and trying to figure out what you want before the baby is born and you can certainly come to one of our meetings and try things on and we have weighted demonstration dolls that people can use to sort of get a feel for what it feels like on your body when you're wearing a 7 or 8 or 9 pound baby. Or larger, because that happens. But you can really start wearing from birth, it will depend on the carrier style that you have available to you, things like a woven wrap or a stretchy wrap or a meitei even, those are things that we can modify or make work for you from birth. And there's really, even premature babies, tiny babies, can be worn, we just have to make sure all those safety considerations around their airway and making sure we're preserving the curvature of their spine and that their body is well supported.

Amanda: As long as all of those considerations are kept in mind, then there's no reason that even a tiny preemie can't be worn from the get go. Lots of people want to know when they can start wearing their baby on their back. We recommend, so we look for things like developmental milestones when we're talking about things like this. We used to talk about kind of age, like 6 months was the magic number at which you could wear your baby on your back. We don't look for age anymore, we really look for, can baby sit up unassisted. Really we're looking for, if they should happen to slump in the carrier while they're on your back, when they're on your front you can adjust them, you can sort of move them around yourself and help them to correct that slump.

Amanda: When they're on your back, you won't be able to see that, so you need to be able to, they need to be able to adjust themselves from a slump, if they should fall asleep back there. The other thing we look for is really good head and neck control, because you're not gonna be able to monitor their breathing as well when they're on your back as when

they're on your front. You can, depending on the carrier style, wear a baby a little bit earlier. For example, in a woven wrap, you might be able to wear an infant, a younger infant, who has good head and neck control, but might not have good trunk control, just because you can get them higher on your back, you can wear them so their little head is closer up here, so you can keep a better eye on their breathing and monitoring their airway.

Amanda: With something like a soft structured carrier, that buckles at the waist, you're not gonna be able to achieve that high back carry, they're always gonna be moving around on your body, so we don't recommend doing a back carry on something like that until it's developmentally appropriate. The other big question that we get, I swear it comes up, I would say at least three times a week in our Facebook group is, what is the best carrier for a newborn or a toddler or whatever age group you're looking for. We really have to say, there is no best carrier, it's impossible for us to tell you what the best carrier is for you. We can make recommendations about styles that are probably more appropriate for a given age range or for your, like I said, how you want to use it, how you expect to wear. But they all fit everyone so differently and everybody has such different preferences within a soft structured role for example. There are probably 20 different brands represented in our library, maybe 20 different, maybe 15, but all of them, excuse me, all of them fit everyone very differently.

Amanda: I can't wear all of them comfortably, I can probably only wear a couple of those brands comfortably because the rest of them just don't fit my body well. So it really depends, some fit petite people differently, some fit larger framed people differently, it's like shopping for jeans is what we always tell people. You have to try them all on to figure out which one is the best. Even ring slings, they have different shoulder styles, it's a one shouldered carrier, they have different should styles. So there are plates and there are gathers and there are hybrid shoulders, so you have to figure out which is best for you and which one works best for your situation. That reason alone, is why we strongly recommend that people come to a meeting, even if you don't join our group, the meetings are completely free for people to attend. It's completely free for someone to come and try things on and become educated about the different styles and types of carriers. The only cost is if people want to join to borrow carriers. We have a couple different membership levels, its 30 dollars annually for sort of the base membership.

Amanda: You can borrow one carrier a month at that rate. If you want to borrow two carriers a month it's 45 dollars a year. Really good value, given the amount of carriers that you have to choose from. Carriers can be kind of expensive, so being able to try one on before you buy it is really beneficial.

Dr. Nancy: You're really saving people money, because when my daughter was born, I went and bought the sling thing at Babies-R-Us, and she was so little and I lost her in there, so I never wore her. So it would've been nice if I had this 15-16 years ago and I could've tried some on, but I wasted, I don't know how much that thing was, but it was not cheap.

Amanda: Exactly.

Dr. Nancy: That's a great service that you guys offer.

Amanda: Thanks.

Dr. Nancy: Anything else, you wanna offer any tips or anything before we sign off today?

Amanda: I don't think so, I think I covered about everything.

Dr. Nancy: You did great, yes.

Amanda: Come to our meetings, if you have any questions at all about it, you can always join our Facebook group. It's linked from our Facebook page. I think the URL for the Facebook page has been provided or will be provided.

Dr. Nancy: It will be, yeah.

Amanda: And our chatter group, our resource group, it's great. If you have any questions at all, join us there and ask questions, come to our meetings, we're very friendly people.

Dr. Nancy: I can tell. So like I said earlier in this video, if you know anyone interested in baby wearing, or they're having a new baby, share this podcast, or this video with them and hopefully they can get to one of the meetings and try on some baby wearing devices, pieces, what do you call them?

Amanda: Carriers, yeah.

Dr. Nancy: Carriers, yeah that. Well Amanda, thank you so much for coming, it was great information, that you shared with everybody, and you're doing a wonderful thing, so I appreciate you taking this over in our state from the national level and we see a lot of baby carriers in our office and love to see the babies being carried, it's great. So thanks again for coming on today, I really appreciate it.

Amanda: Thank you!