



Health Promoting Hospitals and the BFHI

Breastfeeding makes a difference to the health and well-being of children, women and the wider community. Various studies in Ireland have shown that up to 23% of mothers who decide to breastfeed do not leave hospital doing so and of those who do start to breastfeed many stop within the first few weeks. (Becker G & Kelleher CC, 1997)

Breastfeeding is well established as a healthy choice but in Ireland it is not always an easy choice. The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) helps to re-establish the normality of breastfeeding and make it an easy choice.

It involves **reorientation of the health services** to recognise breastfeeding as a normal activity and not a medical condition; and to establish markers of quality that include breastfeeding rates and practices.

Training **develops personal skills** of staff so they can provide assistance to mothers. Parents' skills to gather information, make decisions and use support systems are strengthened. Acquiring the skills of breastfeeding and of expressing milk if needed, fosters the confidence of women in their ability to meet the needs of their babies themselves.

The BFHI specifically recognises the importance of **strengthening community activities** to increase both the awareness of the value of breastfeeding and to provide community networks of support.

The BFHI helps to **create a supportive environment** for mothers using their service as well as for mothers on their staff. A health service that supports breastfeeding also supports their staff who are breastfeeding.

The BFHI is a Health Promoting Strategy

The BFHI helps to **build healthy public policy** by putting breastfeeding and the needs of mothers and children on the agenda of policy makers. Practices that facilitate breastfeeding include supportive policies in **l e g i s l a t i o n**, fiscal measures, and organisational change, including ceasing to use the health services to market breastmilk substitutes and other products.

Contact the Health Promoting Hospitals Network office for information on planning your breastfeeding project as a HPH project.



**Focus in this issue:
Developing Policies**

**Certificates of Commitment
were awarded in October to the:**

**Regional Maternity Hospital, Limerick
National Maternity Hospital, Dublin.**

**This marks their commitment to fully implementing
supportive practices within 2 years.**

Low Breastfeeding Rates Cost Hospitals Money

How much does it cost your hospital when babies do not breastfeed?

Ready-to-Feed - 26.4p per bottle
Sterile teat - 10p
6 feeds a day for 3 days = £6.55 per baby
per 1000 births

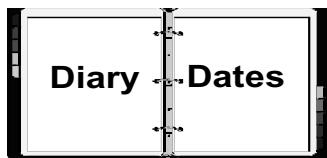
0% exclusive breastfeeding rate
= 1000 x £6.55 = £ 6550
30% = 700 x £6.55 = £ 4585
40% = 600 x £6.55 = £ 3930
50% = 500 x £6.55 = £ 3275
60% = 400 x £6.55 = £ 2620



Decreasing the bottle-feeding rate by 10% (same as increasing breastfeeding by 10%) results in a saving of £655 per 1000 births.

Calculate the savings for your hospital from decreasing the bottle usage.

What could you buy with this saving - more staff, training, resource materials ?

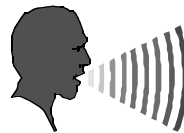


Nov. 10th-11th UK Baby Friendly Initiative Conference, Derby. Contact: HPH office.

March 3rd-4th Annual Conference of the Association of Lactation Consultants in Ireland. Blarney, Cork. *Mother's Milk Matters*. Guest Speaker - Dr Skadi Springer, Neonatologist, Leipzig, Germany. Contact: Mary Healy, 044-44792, mmhealy@eircom.net

April 1st-2nd. La Leche League of Ireland Annual Conference, Bundoran, Co. Donegal. Guest Speaker - Dr Michel Odent. Contact: Joy Harper, 056-65734

May 13th Association of Lactation Consultants in Ireland, Study Day, Galway. Guest Speaker: Dr Colm Wilde, Scotland. *Does breastfeeding always work?* Contact: Mary Healy as above.



Good Ideas, Suggestions and Comments

Please share your activities

Breastfeeding Week

Sligo General Hospital marked Breastfeeding Week with an information display in the shopping centre and a radio interview to raise awareness of breastfeeding in the community.

What do the general public think about breastfeeding?

Over 80% of the general public believed breastfeeding was best according to a study commissioned by the Health Promotion Department of the Eastern Health Board.

Men were more likely to cite attitudes of other people and pain as barriers to breastfeeding, while women cited mobility/inconvenience as a barrier. Younger people and social class 4-6 were more likely to hold negative views regarding breastfeeding.

At the recent HPH conference, we heard from the National Maternity Hospital

Nicola Clarke reviewed the activities undertaken in the National Maternity Hospital to increase support for breastfeeding. Three main areas were highlighted - audit, education of all staff, and implementation of the National Breastfeeding Policy.

Audit indicated both a rise in initiation rate to over 56% and a reduction in the drop-off rate. Eighteen-hour update courses are compulsory for all midwives and other staff members attend shorter courses.

Implementation of the National Policy has included monitoring the International Code of Marketing. The hospital-produced cot cards, weight conversion charts and information leaflets have replaced marketing materials for breastmilk substitutes. Support is provided through a phone-in service and a drop-in clinic. With 8000 births a year, the NMH is one of the leaders in implementing supportive breastfeeding practices.

Send news of your activities to BFHI Link at the HPH office for inclusion.



What are the challenges to implementing this Step?

What if the policy cannot be followed?

Occasionally, it may be necessary to deviate from the policy. This intervention should be justified in line with professional judgement and recorded in the mother's/baby's notes.

Can't mothers just ask if they need help?

A policy should ensure effective care is available to all mothers and babies whether they request that care or not. Mothers should not need to request good care such as information, contact with their baby and support for breastfeeding.

Policies take time to develop

Yes, development of policies take time. Their development maybe part of a quality programme, part of training for staff or done in collaboration with other units. The policy then needs to be agreed by both staff and management - without support policies are very difficult to implement.

Are Guidelines and a Policy the same?

No. The policy will set out the aims, principles and standards that should be achieved. Compliance should be compulsory for all staff. Guidelines and Protocols facilitate evidence-based care by providing further supporting information on the practicalities of implementing the policy. Guidelines alone are not sufficient to meet the criteria for this Step.

How can we make staff aware of the policy?

The National Maternity Hospital included their finished policy in the envelope with the staff member's pay cheque. This ensured all grades of staff received it at the same time. Limerick Regional Maternity Hospital held short sessions in each area of the hospital on a number of occasions so all staff had a chance to attend. Ensure all staff, not just midwives, are aware of the policy.

Heiberg Endresen E, Helsing E. *Acta Paed*, 1995.
Garforth S, Garcia J. *Midwifery*, 1989
Evans S. *Health Visitor*, 1995
Becker G, Kelleher CC, *UCG*, 1997
WHO, Evidence for the Ten Steps, 1998

All staff should be aware of their responsibilities within the policy.



The *BFHI LINK* is made up of a newsletter for staff plus an insert that can be displayed where parents can read it.

You may photocopy *BFHI LINK* for further distribution.

We welcome your news items, comments, and suggestions. Contact the BFHI, c/o Health Promoting Hospitals Network, James Connolly Memorial Hospital, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15.

Current Status

One year into the BFHI project in Ireland, more than half of the maternity units or hospitals are participating in the Initiative. This means over 60 percent of Irish babies are born in hospitals that actively support breastfeeding.

Certificates of Membership were awarded in October to:

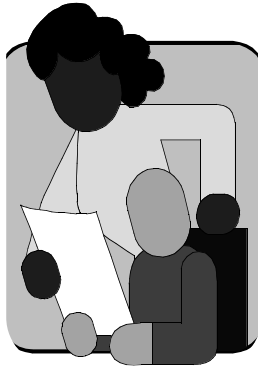
**St. Finbarr's Hospital, Cork
Erinville Hospital, Cork
Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda**

Step One: Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff.

Why have a policy?

A well written policy will provide standards which can be easily measured and audited.

A well written policy indicates research based 'best practice, ensures consistent care, provides standards which can be easily measured/evaluated and audited, and lessens resistance to change.



What should the Policy include?

The policy should explicitly cover all Ten Steps and protect breastfeeding.

As well as the Ten Steps, statements should be included in order to prohibit antenatal group instruction in making up formula feeds and prohibit the promotion of breastmilk substitutes, feeding bottles, teats and dummies.

Where should the policy be displayed?

The Policy should be displayed in all areas that provide care for pregnant women, mothers and babies.

The policy should be available to both parents and staff. If a shortened version is displayed, this should indicate where a copy of the full policy could be read. See an example in the insert.

What about auditing our policy?

Audit ensures that high standards are being maintained and improved.

Hospitals participating in the BFHI are asked to audit their policy annually and report the results to the BFHI. Regular review of the policy also helps to keep in line with current knowledge and the needs of the local patient population. Examine how any quality system in use could include standards relating to breastfeeding as a help to auditing.



What are the assessment criteria for this Step?

The health facility should have a written breastfeeding policy that addresses all 10 steps and protects breastfeeding. The senior nursing officer should be able to describe how the staff are made aware of it.

The policy should be available so that all staff who take care of mothers and babies can refer to it. The policy should be visibly posted in all areas of the health facility which serves mothers, infants, and/or children.

The policy should be displayed in the language(s) most commonly understood by patients and staff.

Compliance with the policy should be audited annually and the results of this audit should be used to ensure continuing full implementation of all Ten Steps.

Mothers Guide to the Hospital s Breastfeeding Policy

This hospital supports the right of parents to make informed choices about infant feeding. All staff will support you in your decision. We believe that breastfeeding is the healthy way to feed you baby and we recognise the important benefits which breastfeeding provides for both you and your child. We therefore encourage you to breastfeed.

Ways in which we will help you to breastfeed:

- ˆ Our staff are specially trained to help you to breastfeed your baby.
- ˆ During your pregnancy, you will be able to discuss breastfeeding individually with a midwife who will answer any questions you may have.
- ˆ You will have the opportunity to hold you baby against your skin soon after birth. The staff will not hurry you or interfere but will be there to support you and help you with your first breastfeed.
- ˆ A midwife will explain how to put your baby to the breast and will help with feeds as needed.
- ˆ You will be shown how to express your breastmilk. You will be given written information on this which you can refer to when you are at home.
- ˆ Most babies do not need to be given any thing other than breastmilk for their first 6 months. If for some reason you baby needs some other feed, the reason will be explained to you by the staff before you are asked to give your permission.
- ˆ Normally, you baby will be with you at all times. If you need to be separated, you will be assisted to maintain breastfeeding and contact with your baby.
- ˆ You will be encouraged to feed your baby whenever he or she shows signs of needing to feed, with no time restrictions.
- ˆ We recommend that you avoid using bottles,dummies and nipple shields while your baby is learning to breastfeed. They can change the way your baby sucks, making it more difficult to breastfeed.
- ˆ Before you leave hospital, you will be given information on people you can contact for help and support with breastfeeding when you are at home.

This is your guide to the hospital s breastfeeding policy. Please ask a member of staff if you would like to see the full policy.

