



The Baby Friendly™ Initiative in Canada – A Summary

www.breastfeedingcanada.ca

The Ten Steps To Successful Breastfeeding

A Joint WHO/UNICEF Statement, Geneva, Switzerland, 1989

Every facility or agency providing maternity services and care of newborn infants should:

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff.
2. Train all health care staff in skills necessary to implement this policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within a half-hour of birth.
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation even if they should be separated from their infants.
6. Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breastmilk, unless medically indicated.
7. Practice rooming-in - allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
9. Give no artificial teats or pacifiers (also called dummies or soothers) to breastfeeding infants.
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or clinic.

The Seven Point Plan for the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding in Community Health Services

Adapted with permission from: UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative, 1999

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all staff and volunteers.
2. Train all health care providers in the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the breastfeeding policy.
3. Inform pregnant women and their families about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Support mothers to establish and maintain exclusive breastfeeding to six months.
5. Encourage sustained breastfeeding beyond six months with appropriate introduction of complementary foods.
6. Provide a welcoming atmosphere for breastfeeding families.
7. Promote collaboration between health care providers, breastfeeding support groups and the local community.

Summary of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes

World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva, Switzerland, 1981

The Code includes these ten important provisions:

1. No advertising of products under the scope of the Code to the public.
2. No free samples to mothers.
3. No promotion of products in health care facilities, including the distribution of free or low-cost supplies.
4. No company representatives to advise mothers.
5. No gifts or personal samples to health workers.
6. No words or pictures idealizing artificial feeding, including pictures of infants, on the labels of the products.
7. Information to health workers should be scientific and factual.
8. All information on artificial feeding, including the labels, should explain the benefits of breastfeeding and all costs and hazards associated with artificial feeding.
9. Unsuitable products such as sweetened condensed milk should not be promoted for babies.
10. All products should be of a high quality and take account of the climatic and storage conditions of the country where they are used.

Highlights of the CNIG, CHNIG and PedNIG Resolution on Breastfeeding and the WHO/UNICEF Baby Friendly™ Initiative Passed Unanimously at RNAO AGM 2006

Resolution 7: RNAO will collaborate with the Ontario Breastfeeding Committee (OBC) to lobby the Ontario Government including the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, the Ministry of Health Promotion and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to:

1. support the implementation of the Baby Friendly™ Initiative (BFI) in Ontario hospitals, public health units and other community health services, and
2. include the BFI in the revision of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines.
3. provide funding to support these initiatives.

The intention of this resolution is to obtain government commitment and funding to:

- 1) *implement the policies and practices as listed in the 10 steps of BFI, the 7-Point Plan and the WHO Code in hospital and community maternity and child health services;*
- 2) *establish the position of coordinator for BFI in Ontario;*
- 3) *ensure breastfeeding support clinics are available across the province for breastfeeding families to receive help, when needed.*

This resolution has been endorsed by the Ontario Public Health Association, the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada, the Ontario Breastfeeding Committee and the Ottawa Breastfeeding Committee.

RNAO Policies which support Breastfeeding and the WHO/UNICEF Baby Friendly™ Initiative (BFI):

Breastfeeding Policy Statement (2002), Breastfeeding BPG (2003), Sponsorship and Advertising Policies (2003), Prevention of Childhood Obesity BPG (2005), Breastfeeding Fundamental Concepts (2006).

Also:

- * Health Canada Family-Centred Maternity and Newborn Care National Guidelines (2000) endorse BFI
- * Health Canada (2004) Statement on Exclusive Breastfeeding (consistent with WHO 2003, 2006)
- * The Health Canada Population Health Fund supports the implementation of BFI in hospitals and community health services (2006).
- * OMHLTC core guidelines aim to increase % infants breastfeeding (e.g., 87% of Ontario infants initiate breastfeeding but only 20% achieve the recommended standard of “exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months”).

What is the Baby Friendly™ Initiative (BFI)?

- * Global WHO/UNICEF program using evidence-based standards of care to promote, protect and support breastfeeding
- * Key elements: “10 Steps”, “WHO Code”, “Seven Point Plan for Community Health Services” (Canada)
- * Principles: Informed decision making, education and continuity of care (early, unrestricted and exclusive breastfeeding, close mother-baby contact, and community support services)
- * BFI includes ALL babies and parents – those who cannot breastfeed for medical indications or have made an informed decision not to breastfeed will still be supported

How is BFI Implemented?

- * Voluntary, self-directed, collaborative process, over several years
- * Standards, tools and consultation provided by the Ontario Breastfeeding Committee (OBC) and its partner the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada according to the WHO/UNICEF procedures
- * External assessment process to achieve official designation – when agency is ready.

Where has BFI been Implemented?

- * BFI has been implemented in 20,000 hospitals and community services worldwide – but only 7 in Canada
- * 5 in PQ and 1 hospital and 1 health unit in Ontario
- * Province of Quebec (2001) Provincial funding, committee and staff to implement BFI to achieve goals for increased breastfeeding rates and durations
- * Province of New Brunswick (2006) – BFI is part of Wellness Strategy with funding for staff and implementation
- * Most other provinces are also working on BFI at the provincial level e.g, Alberta, BC, Manitoba, Saskatchewan.