

A Baby-Friendly Hospital adheres to the following Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding:



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 (feeding bottles) 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.

*From: Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding: The Special Role of Maternity Services, A joint WHO/UNICEF Statement.
Published by the World Health Organization, 1989.*

Though not officially part of the Ten Steps or the BFHI, the following clarifications may be helpful as you work to strengthen breastfeeding practices at your institution.

- An additional criterion for “baby-friendliness” is that the hospital adheres to the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes in that it does not accept or allow free or low-cost supplies of breastmilk substitutes, bottles, teats or pacifiers in the facility.
- It is expected that mothers in a Baby-Friendly Hospital will, within half an hour after birth, be given their infants for uninterrupted and unhurried skin-to-skin contact for at least 30 minutes and will be offered help with breastfeeding, especially if the baby does not feed spontaneously within an hour.
- Nipple shields are not appropriate for the same reason that artificial teats are not – they may interfere with suckling at the breast.
- There are very few reasons why a baby should not be breastfed. These “medically indicated” reasons are listed in an annex to the Global Criteria.
- Medically indicated supplementation in a Baby-Friendly Hospital should not be given by bottle, but by cup, spoon or syringe.
- The prevalence of HIV in the population served by a hospital should not change its Baby-Friendly practices.

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