



# Baby-Friendly™ Initiative



## A Global Strategy to Protect, Promote and Support Breastfeeding



New Brunswick Baby-Friendly™ Initiative Advisory Committee

New Brunswick  
Canada

### Baby-Friendly™ Initiative in New Brunswick

With its Baby-Friendly™ Initiative (BFI) Policy, New Brunswick is embarking on a new journey of BFI to protect, promote and support breastfeeding as a strategy to increase the health and well-being of children and families.

#### NB Baby-Friendly™ Initiative Policy

All New Brunswick Hospitals, Community Health Centres and Public Health Services working with mothers, babies and their families shall undertake steps towards achieving the Baby-Friendly™ designation. This process is based on evidence-based guidelines associated with breastfeeding.

#### Health Canada 2004 Recommendation

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first six months of life for healthy term infants, as breast milk is the best food for optimal growth. Infants should be introduced to nutrient rich, solid foods with particular attention to iron at six months with continued breastfeeding for up to two years and beyond.

**Exclusive breastfeeding:** no food or liquid other than breast milk, not even water is given with the exception of undiluted drops or syrups consisting of vitamin and mineral supplements or medicines.

#### Why choose the BFI Way?

The Department of Health and the New Brunswick Baby-Friendly™ Initiative Advisory Committee recognize that:

- breastfeeding is key to the health and well-being of New Brunswickers
- a population health approach is necessary to re-establish breastfeeding as a cultural norm.

Based on experience from around the world, it is evident that full implementation of the Baby-Friendly™ Initiative program is associated with a significant increase in breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity rates. It is also associated with a reduction of negative child health outcomes and related health care costs.

A **PROVINCIAL HEALTH PLAN** Initiative

### What is Baby-Friendly™ Initiative?

The Baby-Friendly™ Initiative (BFI) is an international program jointly developed by World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the early 1990s to optimize breastfeeding outcomes for mothers and babies by:

- creating a health care environment where breastfeeding is the norm, and
- improving the quality of care through incorporation of evidence-based practices to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in hospitals and in the community.

To support the continuum of care, the Baby-Friendly™ Initiative (BFI) includes guidelines for Hospitals (*The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding*) and the Community (*The Seven Points for the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding in Community Health Services*).

The New Brunswick Baby-Friendly™ Initiative Advisory Committee has combined guidelines from the *10 Steps* and the *7 Points* to further support the need for collaboration among Hospitals, Community Health Centres and Public Health Services providing care to families with infants and young children in protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding. The guidelines also are a key component of preparing for being designated Baby-Friendly™.



### Baby-Friendly™ Initiative Evidence-Based Guidelines

- Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff and volunteers.
- Train all health care staff and volunteers involved in the care of mothers and babies in the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the policy.
- Inform pregnant women and their families about management of breastfeeding and hazards of artificial feeding.
- Help mothers initiate breastfeeding as soon as possible, preferably within the first half-hour.
- Show mothers how to breastfeed, and how to maintain lactation if they should be separated from their infants or be unable to breastfeed for any reason.
- Support mothers to establish and maintain exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and encourage sustained breastfeeding beyond six months with appropriate introduction of complementary foods.
- Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated according to World Health Organization (WHO)/UNICEF Guidelines.
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for breastfeeding families.
- Practice rooming-in: allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
- Encourage breastfeeding on cue and support mothers to establish and maintain exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months with appropriate introduction of complementary foods.
- Promote collaboration between health care providers, breastfeeding support groups and the local community.

### Why become Baby-Friendly™?

The Baby-Friendly™ designation:

- benefits everyone: the mother and her child, the families with infants and children, caregivers and the community as a whole
- demonstrates that a community agency or hospital is committed to offering the highest quality standard of care to all families with infants and young children, improving the health of future generations
- is recognized and respected by professionals and families from around the world
- supports all mothers and babies including women who decide not to breastfeed.

### Who is the BFI authority?

The Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) is the designated national authority for assessing, monitoring and evaluating the progress of the BFI implementation across Canada.

The New Brunswick Baby-Friendly™ Initiative Advisory Committee is the provincial authority. It provides information, support and pre-assessments for NB hospitals and community agencies working to implement the BFI evidence-based practices.

### How many Baby-Friendly™ designations have been awarded?

By late 2005, over 19,000 hospitals worldwide are designated Baby-Friendly™. However, in Canada, there are only three hospitals, one birthing centre and two Community Health service centres that have received this designation, none of which are in the Atlantic provinces.

### How can a Hospital or Community Agency receive the Baby-Friendly™ designation?

To be designated Baby-Friendly™ the hospital or community agency must protect, promote and support breastfeeding by complying with the evidence-based best practices.

**The Process for obtaining Baby-Friendly™ designation** is established by the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) and consists of:

- completing a self assessment with the help of the BFI Self-Appraisal Tool and/or an informal site visit by the provincial BFI coordinator
- passing a Pre-Assessment (typically takes one full day) conducted by a BFI assessor and
- going through a 2 to 4 day External Assessment by a team of BFI assessors.

When issues requiring attention are identified through a self assessment, or through an informal or formal assessment completed by a BFI specialist, a plan of action that includes a progress monitoring system is developed to address the issues.

When all the BFI assessment criteria are met, BCC awards Baby-Friendly™ designation and the event is celebrated by all stakeholders. Re-assessment is necessary every five years to retain Baby-Friendly™ designation.

### Questions?

To learn more about Baby-Friendly™ Initiative, visit [www.gnb.ca](http://www.gnb.ca), keyword: health