



Halton Baby Friendly™ Initiative

Healthier Children. Healthier Families. Healthier Halton.

The Halton Baby Friendly™ Initiative Policy

The Halton Baby Friendly™ Initiative (Halton BFI) is a Community Action Group consisting of health care professionals and consumers working together to facilitate the implementation of the Baby Friendly™ Initiative in Halton. Our mission is to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in Halton region. Our vision is that breastfeeding is the norm for infant feeding in Halton.

Preamble:

The Halton BFI recognizes and believes that breastfeeding provides the best possible nutrition for babies and enhances emotional security. Breastmilk offers the nutrition, growth factors and protection against illness that is needed for healthy growth and development.

We encourage exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life. We encourage continued breastfeeding combined with nutrient rich solid foods from six months to two years of age and beyond. (Health Canada 2004, Canadian Pediatric Society 2005, World Health Assembly (WHA) *Resolutions A54/INF.DOC. /4 1 May 2000*).

We respect the right of women to receive accurate information on infant feeding so they are empowered to make informed decisions. We will support all women, regardless of feeding method, in the true intent of the Baby Friendly™ Initiative.

Health care agencies in the Halton region are encouraged to create their own breastfeeding policies based on the following:

- World Health Organization (WHO) Global Criteria for the Baby Friendly™ Hospital Initiative, as outlined in the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding (Appendix A), or;
- the Breastfeeding Committee of Canada's Baby Friendly™ Initiative in Community Health Services as outlined in the Seven Point Plan (Appendix B).

Agencies will ensure that their policies are reviewed regularly and made known to all staff. Agencies will ensure that staff are trained in the skills needed to implement their policies.

The Halton BFI will:

- Nurture an environment where more women breastfeed their babies, where more women are given accurate information and support to enable them to exclusively breastfeed for the first six months of life, and where more women combine breastfeeding with complementary foods for the first two years of life and beyond.
- Encourage liaisons between health care providers to ensure a seamless delivery of care that is supportive of breastfeeding.
- Strive to increase community awareness of the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent relevant WHA Resolutions in the Halton region.
- Encourage and support health care agencies to pursue BFI designation through networking at various levels.
- Encourage the growth of mother-to-mother breastfeeding support groups throughout the Halton region.
- Support and recognize community facilities, workplaces and businesses that welcome breastfeeding mothers and their families.
- Advocate for current, accurate and consistent breastfeeding information for all Halton residents.

APPENDIX A

World Health Organization's Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding

Every facility providing maternity services and care for 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 call 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.

World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, 1992.

APPENDIX B

Seven Point Plan for the Protection, Promotion and support of Breastfeeding in Community Health Services:

All providers of community health care will:

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff.
2. Train all staff involved in the care of mothers and babies in the skills necessary to implement the policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Support mothers to initiate and maintain breastfeeding.
5. Encourage exclusive and continued breastfeeding with appropriately-timed introduction of complementary foods.
6. Provide a welcoming atmosphere for breastfeeding families.
7. Promote co-operation between health care staff, breastfeeding support groups and the local community.

The Breastfeeding Committee of Canada