



Baby-Friendly Initiative Ontario

Formerly known as The Ontario Breastfeeding Committee (OBC)

The Baby-Friendly Initiative

The Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) in Canada is part of a global effort to implement best practices that protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) was launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 1991. Global criteria were developed to describe minimum standards for maternity services to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

In Canada the initiative includes all forms of support and involvement. The Breastfeeding Committee of Canada's **Integrated Ten Steps for Hospitals and Community Health Services** describe the international standards for the WHO/UNICEF Global Criteria within the Canadian context. Adherence to the **International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and relevant World Health assembly Resolutions** is also required for BFI designation. For further information go to: www.breastfeedingcanada.ca.

Baby-Friendly Initiative Ontario

Baby-Friendly Initiative Ontario (BFI Ontario) is a volunteer multidisciplinary committee consisting of health care professionals, service providers and consumers within Ontario who are interested in protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding by implementing BFI.

BFI Ontario is the provincial authority for BFI in Ontario. In partnership with the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC), BFI Ontario is responsible for the implementation of BFI in Ontario and is the contact between the hospital or community facility and the BCC for all matters related to the Pre-Assessment and the External Assessment process.

BFI Ontario partners with hospitals and community health services to assist and support them to achieve Baby-Friendly designation. Through knowledge exchange and translation, advocacy, the sharing of resources, and provincial monitoring surveys, BFI Ontario provides ongoing expert advice and recommendations on policy and guidelines to government, health facilities, community agencies and professional organizations.

Vision: All eligible facilities in Ontario receive the Baby-Friendly Initiative designation and supporting facilities practice according to Baby-Friendly Initiative standards.

Mission: To protect, promote and support breastfeeding in the province of Ontario through the adoption, implementation and maintenance of the practice standards of the Baby-Friendly Initiative.

Goals:

- To increase the number of hospitals and community health services involved in BFI implementation.
- To increase the number of BFI designated hospitals and community health services.
- To support BFI designated hospitals and community health services to maintain their BFI designation.

How to get involved:

BFI Ontario welcomes anyone who is interested in protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding through implementation of BFI. General meetings are held 4 times per year and can be accessed by teleconference.

For networking, resource and information sharing for community health services the BFI in Community Health Services group meets regularly via teleconference. Support is available for hospitals and community agencies through mentoring, networking and information.

A membership fee is required to sustain the operations of the committee. A "member's only" section of the website allows for sharing of resources developed by the membership, including policies, signage and education modules.

www.bfiontario.ca.

Integrated Ten Steps for Hospitals and Community Health Services (Breastfeeding Committee for Canada, 2011)

- Step 1** Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care providers and volunteers.
- Step 2** Ensure all health care providers have the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the breastfeeding policy.
- Step 3** Inform pregnant women and their families about the importance and process of breastfeeding.
- Step 4** Place babies in uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact with their mothers immediately following birth for at least an hour or until completion of the first feeding or as long as the mother wishes: encourage mothers to recognize when their babies are ready to feed, offering help as needed.
- Step 5** Assist mothers to breastfeed and maintain lactation should they face challenges including separation from their infants.
- Step 6** Support mothers to exclusively breastfeed for the first 6 months, unless supplements are medically indicated.
- Step 7** Facilitate 24 hour rooming-in for all mother-infant dyads: mothers and infants remain together.
- Step 8** Encourage baby-led or cue-based breastfeeding. Encourage sustained breastfeeding beyond six months with appropriate introduction of complementary foods.
- Step 9** Support mothers to feed and care for their breastfeeding babies without the use of artificial teats or pacifiers (dummies or soothers).
- Step 10** Provide a seamless transition between the services provided by the hospital, community health services, and peer-support programs. Apply principles of primary health care and population health to support the continuum of care. Implement strategies that affect the broad determinants that will improve breastfeeding outcomes.

Summary of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and relevant World Health Assembly Resolutions

This Code seeks to protect and promote breastfeeding by ensuring the ethical marketing of breastmilk substitutes by industry.

- No advertising of these products (i.e., formula, bottles, nipples, pacifiers) to the public.
- No free samples of these products to mothers
- No promotion of artificial feeding products in health care facilities, including the distribution of free or low-cost supplies
- No company representatives to advise mothers
- No gifts or personal samples to health workers
- No words or pictures idealizing artificial feeding, including pictures of infants on the labels of products
- Information to health workers should be scientific and factual.
- All information on artificial infant feeding, including the labels, should explain the benefits of breastfeeding, and the cost and hazards associated with artificial feeding.
- Unsuitable products, such as sweetened condensed milk, should not be promoted for babies.

For more information about the Code and subsequent World Health Assembly Resolutions go to:
www.breastfeedingcanada.ca/TheCode.aspx