

## Let's celebrate National Breastfeeding Week!

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network that protects, promotes and supports breastfeeding worldwide. Each year WABA selects a theme for World Breastfeeding Week and the 2021 theme is ***Protect Breastfeeding: A Shared Responsibility!***

### Why does breastfeeding need to be protected?

Breastfeeding is linked with improved health outcomes for babies and mothers. It is environmentally friendly and does not leave the environmental footprint that other methods of feeding leave. Although our bodies are made to provide milk to our babies, mothers and babies need to learn the art of breastfeeding and what works best for them. This can be challenging and many mothers do not reach their breastfeeding goals. Support can make a huge difference!

### Why is the protection of breastfeeding a shared responsibility?

A warm chain of support can help to create an enabling environment to breastfeed. Individuals, health care facilities, workplaces, communities and the government should work to provide a continuum of care during pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum, and beyond.

### How long should a baby breastfeed or receive breastmilk?

Global, national and provincial experts recommend:

- The early initiation of breastfeeding within **1 hour of birth**.
- **Exclusive** breastfeeding for the first **6 months** of life.
- **Continued** breastfeeding up to **2 years of age or beyond**, with introduction of nutritionally adequate and safe complementary (solid) foods at 6 months.

### But, not all mothers can or want to breastfeed...

The Baby-Friendly Initiative recognizes that there are medical and personal reasons for the use of infant formula. Families that decide to feed infant formula need information about the safe preparation, storage and use of formula. Formula feeding is linked with increased health risks for babies, and parents need information to help lessen these risks.

## Check out the following ideas to strengthen the warm chain of support to enable breastfeeding!

### Ideas for individuals:

- Give positive acknowledgement when you see someone breastfeeding.

- Help a breastfeeding family – provide dinner one night, offer to run errands, watch baby for an hour while mother rests etc.
- Encourage public places such as libraries, arenas, restaurants and shopping centres to display the universal breastfeeding symbol that lets everyone know that breastfeeding is welcome. The universal breastfeeding symbol can be found at <https://universalbreastfeedingsymbol.com/>

#### Ideas for health care facilities:

- Learn about the Baby-Friendly Initiative and create an action plan to implement the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding in Canada. See <https://breastfeedingcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/BFI-Implementation-Guideline-May-19.pdf>
- Encourage staff that work with mothers and babies to attend the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada's (BCC) National Symposium, October 1-8, 2021. The National Symposium will take place virtually from 1-3 pm (EDT) each day. A free session is being offered on October 8 to familiarize people with the new BFI Implementation Guideline and monitoring tools. Register at <https://breastfeedingcanada.ca/en/symposium-2021/>
- Connect with other healthcare providers who are interested in the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding. See <https://www.bfontario.ca/members-area/become-a-member/>
- Take a stand against misleading and aggressive marketing of infant formula, bottles and artificial nipples. Do not distribute formula samples or coupons. Clear your workplace of brochures, measuring tapes, weigh scale paper and other products that have commercial endorsements. Provide families with evidence based, factual information about infant feeding.

#### Ideas for workplaces:

- Check to see if your workplace has a policy that supports breastfeeding when an employee returns to work following maternity leave.
- Find out about breastfeeding resources in your community and share the information with expectant parents.
- Be supportive when an employee needs to breastfeed or express milk at the workplace.
- Help other workplaces establish policies that support breastfeeding families.

#### Ideas for communities:

- Create a welcoming atmosphere for breastfeeding families throughout the community. Encourage public buildings to display the universal breastfeeding symbol and provide spaces where families can breastfeed comfortably.
- Have a list of local breastfeeding resources and disseminate broadly throughout the community.
- Encourage municipal government officials to support breastfeeding and lead by example with municipal policies to support breastfeeding families.

Visit the Baby-Friendly Initiative Ontario (BFI Ontario) website to learn more about supporting the Baby-Friendly Initiative at <https://www.bfiontario.ca/>

**National Breastfeeding Week Social Media Messages  
(October 1-7, 2021)**

**Canadians want to breastfeed: 92% of Canadian babies start out breastfeeding.**

#WBW2021 #protectbreastfeedingtogether #breastfeed #BFI

**Hospital practices make a difference to successful breastfeeding!**

#WBW2021 #protectbreastfeedingtogether #breastfeed #BFI

**Community health services help families reach their infant feeding goals!**

#WBW2021 #protectbreastfeedingtogether #breastfeed #BFI

**Breastmilk is all your baby needs for the first 6 months of life!**

#WBW2021 #protectbreastfeedingtogether #breastfeed #infantfeeding #BFI

**Create a warm chain of support for breastfeeding!**

#WBW2021 #protectbreastfeedingtogether #breastfeed #BFI

**Stick with the facts – insist on information about infant feeding that is free from commercial endorsement. #WBW2021 #protectbreastfeedingtogether #breastfeed #infantfeeding #BFI**

**Keep breastfeeding for 2 years and beyond!**

#WBW2021 #protectbreastfeedingtogether #breastfeed #infantfeeding #BFI