

## THE BABY FRIENDLY PROCESS

In 1989, a joint statement entitled Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding: the special role of maternity services, was published by the World Health Assembly and the United Nations Children Fund. The aim of this statement was to increase awareness of the critical role of health services in the promoting of breastfeeding, and to give guidelines for appropriate information and support to mothers. In this statement, the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding were introduced. The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative was launched world wide in 1992 in an effort to encourage the implementation of these Ten Steps.

### The 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 about the benefits and management of breastfeeding
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding
4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within half an 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 milk feeds or water other than breastmilk, unless indicated for medical reason
7. Allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day from birth
8. Encourage natural breastfeeding frequently and on demand
9. Do not give, or encourage, the use of artificial teats or dummies to breastfed infants. Do not encourage the use of nipple shields either

10. Promote the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to these on discharge from the hospital or clinic

### Basic Principle

- The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding are non negotiable. Together they are the minimum package of hospital and maternity facility practices required to the Baby Friendly.
- The Global Criteria for the WHO/UNICEF BFHI establish a measurable standard for each of the Ten Steps.
- The Guide for Scoring the Global Hospital Assessment Questionnaire specifies the percentage of success required to adequately fulfill each of the ten Steps. To be designated Baby Friendly, a facility must satisfy the requirements of each step

### HIV/AIDS

Given the possibility of vertical transmission of HIV via breastmilk, the question arises as to whether it is necessary or valid to continue to promote BFHI and breastfeeding. Scientific evidence suggests that breastfeeding increases the risk of mother to child transmission (MTCT) by 12 to 43%.

MTCT from breastfeeding can occur anytime during the feeding and the longer the breastfeeding period, the more chance there is of MTCT. The type of feeding also increases the risk of MTCT. Mixed feeding, which involves giving the baby any other food or drink whilst breastfeeding increases the risk of MTCT by 50%.

The policy on PMTCT therefore is seen as part of the Ten Steps and is included under Step 6.