Purpose

To demonstrate Covenant Health commitment to protect, support and promote breastfeeding and the right to make an informed decision in regard to infant feeding choices.

Policy Statement

Covenant Health will promote and follow the *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding* as identified by the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (2012) (Appendix A) and adhere to the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (Appendix B). This is accomplished by allowing no advertising to mothers and their families of any items covered under the CODE including breast milk substitutes, nipples, and pacifiers. Covenant Health will strive to reduce the barriers to successful breastfeeding and work to ensure optimal supports are in place for breastfeeding families.

Applicability

This policy and procedure applies to all Covenant Health healthcare providers, volunteers, students and any other persons acting on behalf of Covenant Health.

Principles

Covenant Health recognizes that:

1. Breastfeeding is the natural and optimal way to feed infants and the foundation for a healthy life.

2. Breastfeeding provides numerous benefits to mother and infant (See Appendix C).

3. Breastfeeding helps to create and establish a lasting bond between mothers and infants who form an inseparable biological and social unit.

Policy Elements

Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding

The following steps have been adapted from the BFI Integrated 10 Step Practice Indicators for Hospital and Community Health Services, BCC, 2012 (Appendix A)

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 one-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 24-hour rooming-in.

8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand.

9. Give no artificial nipples or pacifiers to healthy, term breastfeeding infants.

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

Related Documents
- Cup Feeding May 2014
- Supplementation for the Breastfed Well Term Newborn May 2014
- Human Milk Management May 2014
- Breast Milk Substitute Feeding Policy 2016

References


Revision Date(s)
- Breastfeeding Policy Original 1999
- Revised Breastfeeding Policy Jan.8, 2013
APPENDIX A

1. **Step One: Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care providers and volunteers.**
   
   - All staff and volunteers will be informed of the breastfeeding policy as part of their general orientation to Covenant Health.
   
   - A copy of the breastfeeding policy shall be provided to all health care providers in the Women’s and Child Health Program. Health care providers are expected to be knowledgeable and competent in the theoretical and practical skills.
   
   - A summary of this policy and patient education materials shall be displayed in all areas of the hospital that serve mothers, infants and/or children (See Appendix D).

2. **Step Two: Ensure all health care providers have the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the breastfeeding policy.**
   
   - All staff will receive education and training about breastfeeding and the Baby Friendly Initiative.
   
   - Further education, consisting of a twenty hour breastfeeding course with supervised clinical practice, will be provided for healthcare providers directly involved in prenatal or post-natal breastfeeding assessment, support, and/or intervention.
   
   - Staff will facilitate informed decision making regarding infant feeding by providing written information and individualized teaching to non-breastfeeding mothers.

3. **Step Three: Inform pregnant women and their families will be informed about the importance and process of breastfeeding.**
   
   - Breastfeeding will be promoted by providing pregnant women and their support persons the information required to make an informed decision about infant feeding including the importance of the benefits of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding and the importance of skin to skin contact.
   
   - Breastfeeding mothers shall receive support and information about basic breastfeeding management including position and latch, cue-based feeding, prevention and management of breastfeeding challenges, and risks of non-medically indicated supplementation.
   
   - All information on pregnancy, parenting, infant feeding, and child care shall be evidence based, current and accurate.
   
   - Information on breast milk substitutes will be provided individually to women who have made an informed decision not to breastfeed. This information will be current and appropriate.
4. **Step Four:** 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.

- Skin-to-skin care is initiated immediately after birth unless separation is medically indicated.
- Healthcare providers will promote breastfeeding by encouraging early breastfeeding and offering assistance as needed.
- If the mother is ill or unavailable, health care providers will support skin-to-skin contact with another support person.

5. **Step Five:** Assist mothers to breastfeed and maintain lactation should they face challenges including separation from their infants.

- Healthcare providers will teach effective position and latch, effective hand expression, and cup/spoon feeding.
- Healthcare providers will observe and document:
  - at least one feed in the first six hours after delivery
  - effective breast milk transfer at least once on every shift
- Mothers with unresolved breastfeeding challenges will be referred to a lactation consultant.

**In special situations, when mothers or infants are separated healthcare providers:**

- Promote breastfeeding by encouraging and arranging mothers and babies to remain together.
- Provide mothers with a breast milk collection kit, storage containers, and access to an electric breast pump.
- Promote breastfeeding by encouraging mothers to hand express within six hours from birth and to continue pumping at least eight or more times per day

6. **Step Six:** Support mothers to exclusively breastfeed for the first six months unless supplements are medically indicated.

*When there is a medical indication for supplementation, mother’s expressed breast milk is the first choice, followed by pasteurized donor milk and, breast milk substitutes.*

- Promote and protect exclusive breastfeeding by giving breastfeeding infants no supplementary feeds unless medically indicated according to the BCC/WHO/UNICEF guidelines and reason for supplementation should be documented. Refer to Supplementation for the Breastfed Well Term Newborn Policy.
- Promote exclusive breastfeeding by encouraging opportunities for early, frequent and unrestricted breastfeeding of all infants including those at risk for hypoglycemia, jaundice or dehydration.
- Provide mothers using breastmilk substitutes sufficient information to make an informed decision regarding feeding their infants, including:
7. **Step Seven:** Facilitate 24-hour rooming-in for all mother-infant dyads: mothers and infants remain together.

- All mothers and infants remain together throughout their hospital stay and encourage support person to stay overnight.

- Healthcare providers are to complete all infant procedures while the mother is present and encourage skin-to-skin contact during painful procedures.

- Healthcare providers educate parents on Canadian Safe Sleep guidelines.

8. **Step Eight:** Encourage baby-led or cue-based breastfeeding. Encourage sustained breastfeeding beyond six months with appropriate introduction of complementary foods.

- Teach mothers to recognize and respond to their infants feeding cues.

- Encourage mothers to breastfeed at least eight times or more in 24 hours.

- Teach mothers that colostrum is adequate nourishment for their babies for the first 48-72 hours and that some initial weight loss is normal.

9. **Step Nine:** Mothers will be supported to feed and care for their breastfeeding babies without the use of artificial teats or pacifiers (dummies or soothers).

- Protect breastfeeding by not providing pacifiers to breastfeeding infants.

- Provide parents information regarding the risks of using pacifiers or teats.

- If supplementation is medically indicated, promote alternate feeding methods such as, cup feeding and spoon feeding.

10. **Step Ten:** Provide a seamless transition between the services provided by the hospital, community health services, and peer support programs.

- Liaise and collaborate with community breastfeeding support services.

- Provide all families with written information about the signs of effective breastfeeding and a list of community breastfeeding resources.

- Prior to discharge if variances of effective breastfeeding are evident provide parents written discharge feeding plans with appropriate community breastfeeding follow up.
APPENDIX B

WHO INTERNATIONAL CODE OF MARKETING BREAST-MILK SUBSTITUTES

Summary of the main points

1. No advertising of these products (eg. artificial feeding, bottles, nipples, pacifiers) to the public.

2. No free samples of these products to mothers.

3. No promotion of artificial feeding products in health care facilities, including the distribution of free or low-cost supplies.

4. No company representatives advise mothers.

5. No gifts or personal samples to health workers.

6. No words or pictures idealizing artificial feeding, including pictures of infants, on the labels of products.

7. Information to health workers should be scientific and factual.

8. All information on artificial infant feeding, including the labels, should explain the benefits of breastfeeding, and the costs and hazards associated with artificial feeding.

9. Unsuitable products, such as sweetened condensed milk, should not be promoted for babies.

10. All products should be of high quality and take account of the climate and storage conditions of the country where they are used.
**APPENDIX C**

### Benefits of Breastfeeding:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Infant</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotes mother/infant bonding</td>
<td>Decreased incidence of multiple infectious diseases in infancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces the risk of osteoporosis</td>
<td>Decrease risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced risk of breast and ovarian cancer</td>
<td>Lower risk of childhood cancers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater postpartum loss</td>
<td>Promotes healthy brain development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduce risk of cardiovascular disease</td>
<td>Best food for healthy growth and development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faster healing after delivery</td>
<td>Always safe, fresh, and exact temperature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delayed return of menses</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Convenient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost effective</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Better for environment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
10 steps to successful breastfeeding

Covenant Health promises to support breastfeeding families and invites you to follow these steps. The steps are guided by the World Health Organization and Breastfeeding Committee for Canada to help ensure that breastfeeding your infant is a success.

1. **Breastfeeding policy**
   We have a breastfeeding policy that all staff, volunteers, and doctors follow. Our promise is to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding and respect the decision of each mother.

2. **Staff education**
   Our staff caring for you before, during, and after the birth of your baby have special education in breastfeeding.

3. **Talk about breastfeeding**
   We will give you all of the information you need to make a good decision for you and your baby.

4. **Start breastfeeding**
   We help each mother get breastfeeding off to a good start by placing the baby in uninterrupted skin-to-skin (kangaroo) care immediately after birth for at least one hour.

5. **Learn to breastfeed**
   We will offer you help so you and your baby can breastfeed successfully.

6. **Feed breastmilk only**
   Your breastmilk has everything your baby needs.

7. **Room-in with your baby**
   Having your baby with you at all times helps you learn the baby’s hunger signs.

8. **Feed on demand**
   Breastfeeding your baby for as long and as often as your baby needs helps make milk for your baby.

9. **Avoid soothers or bottles with nipples**
   Use of soothers and bottles with nipples in healthy babies may cause problems with breastfeeding and with your milk supply.

10. **Community support**
    We will make sure you know about, and have contact information for, any breastfeeding support programs and groups in your community.