



## Steps to a Breastfeeding-Friendly Practice

### Educate – Encourage – Welcome

#### Educate

- Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all office staff. For example, post “Steps to a Breastfeeding-Friendly Practice” in your office.
- Inform all pregnant women and their partners about the risks of not breastfeeding. Praise from a physician is very motivating. Let breastfeeding families know you think they have made a healthy choice.
- Provide some form of yearly in-service on breastfeeding for your staff. Obtain a copy of *Medications and Mothers’ Milk* by Tom Hale for information about drugs and breastfeeding.
- Inform mothers they can maintain breastfeeding, even if they are separated from their infants, by using a breast pump.
- Emphasize the importance of 12 months of breastfeeding for optimal infant and maternal health. Encourage mothers to continue breastfeeding when they go back to work. Provide pamphlets on working and breastfeeding.
- Recommend that parents attend prenatal breastfeeding classes that include fathers. Routinely refer mothers to WIC agencies and community-based breastfeeding-support groups.

#### Encourage

- Avoid advertising formula in your office. Give written, non-commercial information about breastfeeding. Avoid giving out packages of formula or baby items from formula companies. Remove sign-up sheets for formula clubs. Leave orders in the hospital that breastfeeding mothers are not to receive commercial discharge bags from formula companies, but instead are to be given materials that are known to support breastfeeding.
- Encourage breastfeeding on demand where the infant is allowed unrestricted access to the breast and is fed when early hunger signs are present, as per AAP guidelines. Advise parents to delay options such as scheduled feeding and sleep training until the infant is 3 months old and breastfeeding is well established.

#### Welcome

- Instruct office staff to welcome breastfeeding mothers. Display breastfeeding posters and post a sign in your waiting area to let mothers know it is OK to breastfeed in your office.
- Identify and train a staff person as a breastfeeding resource, or establish a referral relationship with a board-certified lactation consultant to assist mothers with breastfeeding problems.

#### References:

- Freudenheim, J., R. Marshall, and S. Graham. 1994. Exposure to breastmilk in infancy and the risk of breast cancer. *Epidemiology* 5:324–31.
- Newcomb, P., et al. 1994. Lactation and a reduced risk of premenopausal breast cancer. *New Engl. J. Med.* 330(2):81–87.

Breastmilk. 100% natural ingredients.