



breastfeeding
GOOD FOR BABY. GOOD FOR YOU.



Breastfeeding mothers need support

Because every baby deserves the best

How this booklet can help you

More mothers in Northern Ireland are choosing to breastfeed, and more of them are continuing to do so after the first weeks and months following birth.

This booklet will help you if you are breastfeeding or considering breastfeeding or if you have a partner, family member or friend who is breastfeeding and you want to offer your support.

Breastfeeding - the best start to life

Breastfeeding gives babies the best possible start in life and any breastfeeding, even for a short time, is beneficial for both mother and baby.

Good for baby

Reduced risk of:

- Ear infections
- Gastroenteritis (tummy bugs)
- Respiratory infections
- Childhood obesity
- Sudden infant death syndrome (cot death)

Good for mum

Reduced risk of:

- Breast cancer
- Ovarian cancer
- Type 2 diabetes

If you are breastfeeding or considering breastfeeding, every day makes a difference to your baby. The longer you breastfeed, the longer the protection lasts and the greater the benefits. Breast milk changes as your baby grows, so your baby will get all the nutrients, growth factors and hormones needed for the best nutrition, development and health.

For more information, see *Off to a good start*, which is given to new mothers on discharge from hospital. This book presents the reasons why mothers and babies benefit from breastfeeding and explains how to breastfeed successfully.

You can also download the book from

www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/good-start



How to support a breastfeeding mother

New mothers need a lot of support, especially in the early days and weeks of breastfeeding. Research shows that when breastfeeding support is offered to new mothers, they breastfeed more and for longer.

A partner's support is vital. If you are a partner, you can help by:

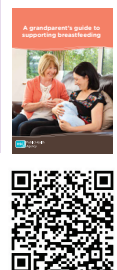
- making sure mother and baby are comfortable while feeding;
- explaining to family and friends about the importance of breastfeeding;
- bringing your partner a drink or a healthy snack to eat, such as a piece of fruit or a slice of toast;
- preparing meals and doing the housework so your partner can concentrate on feeding your baby;
- encouraging your partner, particularly when they are very tired or finding things difficult;
- protecting them from negative opinions about breastfeeding, which may be undermining.

See the leaflet *What Dads should know* at www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/what-dads-should-know-about-breastfeeding



Support from grandparents and other family members is also important. See the leaflet *A grandparents guide to supporting breastfeeding* at www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/grandparents-guide-supporting-breastfeeding

The leaflet answers a number of questions that new grandparents may have, such as "How will I know the baby is getting enough milk?" and "If I can't give the baby a bottle, how will I get to know my new grandchild?"



Offer your help

If you have a family member or a friend who is breastfeeding, try to offer your help. Practical help like preparing food and dropping it round or offering to go to the shops will mean a lot and if you are going out to meet a family member or friend who is breastfeeding, you could try to find a breastfeeding friendly meeting place.

Breastfeeding welcome here scheme

You will see the Public Health Agency (PHA) pink and white heart sticker displayed in over 800 cafes, restaurants, shops, council facilities, universities, community pharmacies, tourist attractions and other public and private sector venues across Northern Ireland. This is to make you aware that the business welcomes breastfeeding. To see members in your local area, visit

www.breastfedbabies.org



Breastfeeding peer support

If you are breastfeeding, don't be afraid to ask for the support and information you need to make breastfeeding work for you and your baby. No problem is too small – if something is worrying you, the chances are that other mothers will have felt the same.

You can get help from a peer supporter, your midwife, health visitor, or a lactation consultant. Peer support volunteers are mothers who have themselves breastfed and have had training so that they are able to offer breastfeeding information and support to other mothers in their area. To find out how you can speak to a peer support mother, ask your midwife or health visitor.

Local breastfeeding support groups

You might also want to join a local breastfeeding group. It's a great way of making new friends as well as sharing the ups and downs of looking after a new baby.

Northern Ireland has almost 60 breastfeeding groups which offer the opportunity to meet face-to-face or online to talk about feeding your baby, provide friendship and share a cup of tea or coffee. These groups are really helpful if you don't know any other breastfeeding mothers or if you have a concern about breastfeeding.

Ask your midwife, health visitor or local Sure Start team where and when your local group meets or visit www.breastfedbabies.org/getting-support-when-you-breastfeed for a map of groups in Northern Ireland.



You may want to link with other breastfeeding mums online. The Breastfeeding in NI Facebook page is an online community with over 8,000 breastfeeding mothers. See www.facebook.com/BreastfeedinginNI



Telephone support from a breastfeeding counsellor

Voluntary breastfeeding counsellors can give you telephone advice about breastfeeding concerns.

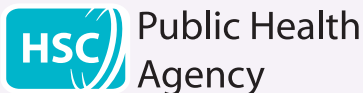
National Breastfeeding Helpline: 0300 100 0212

Northern Ireland La Leche League Breastfeeding Helpline: 028 9581 8118

National Childbirth Trust Support Line: 0300 330 0700

The PHA cannot guarantee the quality or safety of information provided by other organisations. Signposting to these organisations does not necessarily imply endorsement.

For further information on breastfeeding, support and sources of help, visit www.breastfedbabies.org



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