

## Breastfeeding and Maternal Child Health

### Supporting mothers, creating healthy babies

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 **World Health Organization:** Baby friendly hospitals aim to support breastfeeding mothers and provided them with the education and support needed for exclusive breastfeeding.

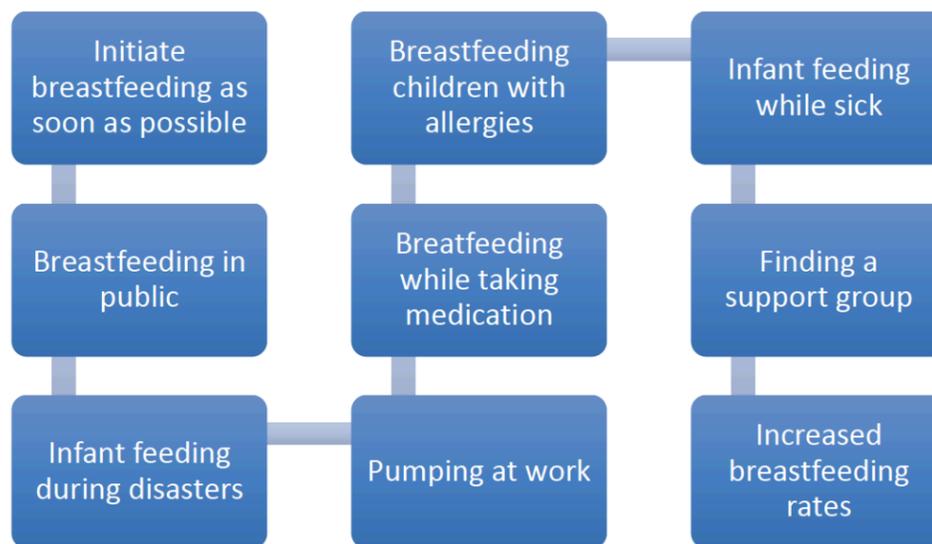
 **American Academy of Pediatrics:** Recommends exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months, and continuation of breastfeeding for one year or longer as desired.

 **Center for Disease Control:** Mothers offered breastfeeding support have higher rates of exclusively breastfeeding than those who do not receive support



- ❖ Research has shown that breastfeeding is recognized as the best source of nutrition for most infants. <sup>1</sup>
- ❖ There is a 36% reduction in sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) among babies who breastfed compared to those who did not. <sup>2</sup>
- ❖ Breastfed infants are less likely to be obese in adolescence and adulthood. <sup>2</sup>
- ❖ Breastfed infants are less vulnerable to developing type 1 and type 2 diabetes. <sup>2</sup>
- ❖ Breastfed babies have a lower risk of milk allergy, atopic dermatitis, and wheezing early in life, if breastfed for at least 4 months. <sup>2</sup>
- ❖ Healthy People 2020, maternal, infant, and child health (MICH) objectives state; currently 33.6% of woman nationwide exclusively breastfed at 3 months with a target goal of 46.2%. <sup>3</sup>

The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative began in 1991, funded by the World Health Organization and United Nations Children’s Fund. There are currently 95 baby friendly hospitals in the state of California, with 35 residing in Los Angeles County. These hospitals employ steps to create a supportive learning environment for new mothers. Low exclusive breastfeeding rates indicates the need for policy change, education, and support. Currently 8.3% of California’s population does not have health insurance and 12.8% live in poverty. <sup>4</sup> The need for additional breastfeeding education and support in a hospital environment, with trained professionals, is evident.



- Providing new mothers with breastfeeding education on admission to labor and delivery can help increase breastfeeding initiation rates in hospitals and baby friendly hospitals alike.
- Promoting public breastfeeding policies will help new mothers feel safe and at ease while breastfeeding outside of home and private areas.
- Education on continuation of breastfeeding during disasters such as fires and earthquakes will ensure breastfeeding continuation during troubled times.
- Increasing awareness of infant food allergies will provide new mothers with education, support, and options to continue their breastfeeding journey.
- Providing education that allows new mothers to continue breastfeeding while taking prescribed medications will increase breastfeeding duration.
- Encouraging continuation of breastfeeding for the working mother will decrease cessation of breastfeeding.
- Addressing ways to keep baby safe while sick will reassure new mothers that breastfeeding while sick is possible if done safely.
- Attending a support group will help assure mothers that their ae ups and downs in every breastfeeding journey, having needs met will increase breastfeeding duration.
- Creating breastfeeding and maternal child health policies leads to increased staff education, leading to increased maternal support and increased breastfeeding rates



References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Strategies to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases: The CDC Guide to Strategies to Support Breastfeeding Mothers and Babies. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2013.
2. American Academy of Pediatrics. (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.aap.org/en-us/Pages/Default.aspx>
3. Maternal, Infant, and Child Health. (2020, March 9). Retrieved from <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/maternal-infant-and-child-health/objectives>
4. “U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: California.” Census Bureau QuickFacts, 2020, [www.census.gov/quickfacts/CA](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/CA).