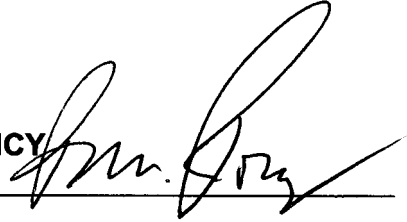


SUBJECT: **BREASTFEEDING POLICY**  
APPROVED BY: Chief Executive Officer  
EFFECTIVE DATE: 2009 07  
REVISED/REVIEW DATE:



### **Preamble**

Labrador-Grenfell Health endorses the World Health Organization (WHO) and Health Canada recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding for up to two years and beyond. This policy is based on the standards of the WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly Initiative.

### **Purpose**

To promote a better understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in the healthy development of a mother and baby.

To provide clear, accurate and impartial information regarding the benefits of breastfeeding and risks of not breastfeeding to all women as early as possible in their prenatal period.

To facilitate optimal breastfeeding practices and offer support to women in a culturally appropriate manner.

To provide information and support to strengthen a woman's skill and technique in breastfeeding, thereby enhancing her confidence to breastfeed.

To enable a seamless transition of care from hospital to community for all breastfeeding mothers and babies.

To provide women equal access to breastfeeding information and support to enable them to breastfeed exclusively for six months with continued breastfeeding for up to two years and beyond.

To enable Labrador-Grenfell Health employees who have contact with breastfeeding mothers to provide competent support through training in effective breastfeeding management.

To encourage and promote an enabling and supportive environment for breastfeeding families who return to work.

**Policy/Standard:**

Labrador-Grenfell Health will comply with the WHO/UNICEF International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (1981) (“the Code”) and subsequent, relevant World Health Assembly (WHA) Resolutions (See Appendix A):

- No advertising of breastmilk substitutes (formula), feeding bottles or pacifiers, or the display of the logos of the manufacturers of these products.
- No educational or promotional materials for parents provided by the manufacturers of breastmilk substitutes. Scientific and factual information for health professionals is permitted, but the information can not be promoted or given to clients.
- No group instruction on breastmilk substitutes (formula preparation and feeding) shall be given by employees.
- No gratuities, incentives or gifts (including research and education funding) from breastmilk substitutes companies will be accepted.
- No free and/or discounted (no less than standard discount or 80% of cost) breastmilk substitutes from manufacturing companies will be accepted. Labrador-Grenfell Health will purchase breastmilk substitutes and related supplies in the same manner as other pharmaceuticals.

**Procedure:**

**Communicating the Breastfeeding Policy:**

The breastfeeding policy is communicated to all employees within the organization and community partners.

- All employees will have access to a copy of this policy and all new employees will be orientated to the policy upon commencing employment.
- The public policy statement (Appendix B) will be displayed in all Labrador-Grenfell Health facilities.

**Training of Employees:**

All employees who have contact with pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and their

families will receive training in breastfeeding management at a level appropriate to their role and/or function, profession or service area. The training and education for front-line employees will reflect the core content of the WHO/UNICEF 20 hour course, including three hours of supervised clinical instruction.

- The Employee Development, Training and Health Department will coordinate breastfeeding educational training for employees as appropriate to their role and responsibilities, including contracted employees.
- All nursing employees working with breastfeeding families will complete the Breastfeeding Independent Study Module.

#### **Informing Pregnant Women of the Benefits and Management of Breastfeeding:**

All pregnant women are made aware of the benefits of breastfeeding and the risks of using breastmilk substitutes for both the mother and baby.

- All women who have made an informed decision not to breastfeed will be given the opportunity to discuss breastfeeding and using breastmilk substitutes with a health care professional on a one-to-one basis.
- All pregnant women will be provided information regarding the physiological basis of breastfeeding, good management practices and overcoming common challenges or experiences they may encounter; as outlined in the **Growing Babies Growing Parents Resource** and other provincially suggested resources.
- All resource materials and information should reflect Baby-Friendly practices (see Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) BFI Practice Outcome Indicators).

#### **Supporting the Initiation and the Establishment of Breastfeeding:**

A health care professional will be available to assist a mother with breastfeeding until breastfeeding is well established. A breastfeeding assessment, using the LATCHES Assessment Tool, will be completed for all breastfeeding mothers.

- All mothers should be encouraged to hold and keep their babies skin-to-skin as soon as possible after birth. They will be encouraged to breastfeed within the first hour post vaginal and cesarean births.
- Encourage mothers and babies to remain together 24 hours per day (rooming-in) unless clinically contraindicated (see Regional Nursing Breastfeeding Policy). Complete infant procedures while infant is at the bedside.

- Babies will be breastfed on cue, unless otherwise clinically contraindicated. Provide information and support to the mother so that she recognizes the baby's early feeding cues.
- All breastfeeding mothers will be shown and given information about how to express their milk, including hand expression prior to hospital discharge.
- It is the responsibility of health care professionals caring for mother and baby to ensure the mother is given help and encouragement to initiate and sustain lactation during periods of separation from her baby.

### **Supporting Exclusive Breastfeeding:**

For the first six months, breastfed babies should not receive water, breastmilk substitutes or foods, unless medically indicated (see Regional Nursing Breastfeeding Policy).

- Informed consent must be obtained from parents and documented if supplementary feeds are required.
- Parents who choose to supplement their baby with a breastmilk substitute or other foods and drinks during the first six months should be made aware of the implications this may have on breastfeeding and other risks involved.
- Health care professionals will not promote or provide pacifiers during hospital stay or at least until breastfeeding is well established (6 weeks) and will inform parents of the risks of their use.
- Breastmilk substitutes will NOT be placed at the bedside of breastfeeding women.

### **A Breastfeeding Friendly Organization:**

Breastfeeding will be regarded as the normal way to feed babies and young children.

- Mothers will be enabled and supported to feed their infants in all public areas within Labrador-Grenfell Health facilities. Suitable facilities will be made available, upon request, for breastfeeding mothers who prefer privacy.
- Breastfeeding-friendly signage and a public policy statement (see Appendix B) will be displayed in all Labrador-Grenfell Health facilities.

### **A Breastfeeding Friendly Employer:**

Labrador-Grenfell Health will support employees who wish to continue breastfeeding after returning to work from maternity leave, while taking into consideration work-related travel and applicable collective agreements.

- The manager/supervisor and the employee will mutually agree upon hours of work, meal breaks, and assignments that support the continuation of breastfeeding. Such arrangements are subject to service delivery requirements and applicable collective agreements.
- Employees will have access to available private space within their place of work to breastfeed or express milk.
- Employees will have access to a suitable refrigerator for storage of expressed breastmilk.

### **Community Support for Breastfeeding:**

Breastfeeding will be promoted and encouraged as the norm by all members of our health care team. Labrador-Grenfell Health supports collaboration among health care professionals and community-based breastfeeding support groups.

- Contact information for community-based breastfeeding support will be provided to all breastfeeding mothers upon discharge.
- The Labrador-Grenfell Health Breastfeeding Network will partner with local support groups, businesses, organizations, the media, and other community groups. This partnership will raise awareness of the importance of breastfeeding, the risks of using breastmilk substitutes, and encourage the provision of breastfeeding friendly areas.
- Breastfeeding support groups will be invited to contribute to further development of the breastfeeding policy through involvement in the Labrador-Grenfell Health Breastfeeding Network.
- Breastfeeding data describing the initiation and duration rates of breastfeeding in hospitals and community health settings will be collected regionally.

**Materials Required:**

LATCHES Assessment Tool (see Regional Nursing Breastfeeding Policy)

Growing Babies Growing Parents Resource (Intranet Resource)

WHO/UNICEF Code (Appendix A)

Public Policy Statement (Appendix B)

BCC BFI Practice Outcome Indicators for Hospitals and Community Health Services  
(see references)

**References:**

Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (The National Authority for the WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly Initiative in Canada, 2004), BFI Practice Outcome Indicators for Hospitals and Community Health Services at [www.breastfeedingcanada.ca](http://www.breastfeedingcanada.ca)

WHO (1981) Summary of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, and subsequent, relevant WHA resolutions.

Breastfeeding Independent Learning Module, Labrador-Grenfell Health

Breastfeeding Handbook, Department of Health and Community Services, N.L., 2008

Kumar S, Wieser LJ, Havstad S. The LATCH Scoring System and Prediction of Breastfeeding Duration. *J Hum Lact.* 2006; 22(4):391-397.

\*Jensen D, Wallace S, Kelsay P. LATCH: A Breastfeeding Charting System and Documentation Tool. *J Hum Lact.* 1994; 23(1):27-32.

Davis M. L-A-T-C-H-E-S\* Breastfeeding Assessment Tool For the First Four Weeks, 1999.

## Appendix A

### ***Summary of The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and Subsequent, Relevant Resolutions of the World Health Assembly***

This appendix is a summarized version of the Code. The full-length version and the subsequent, relevant WHA resolutions can be found at <http://breastfeedingcanada.ca/html/webdoc12.html>

**No advertising** of artificial infant feeding products to the general public.

**No free product samples** to pregnant women, new mothers or their families.

**Information** and educational materials must explain the benefits of breastfeeding, the health hazards associated with bottle-feeding, and the costs of using infant formula.

**No promotion through health care facilities.** The **health care system** may not be used to provide free samples to mothers or the promotion of products, such as product displays, posters, distribution of promotional booklets, flyers or the use of product logos. Company/sales employees may not use the health care system for product promotion.

**No gifts or samples to health care workers.** Product information to health care workers must be factual and scientific.

**No free or low-cost supplies** of infant formulas, bottles or nipples to maternity wards, hospitals or any part of the health care system.

**Labeling** of products must clearly state: the superiority of breastfeeding; that products should be used only on the advice of a health care worker; the instructions for appropriate preparation; and warn about the hazards of inappropriate preparation. No nutrition and health claims may be used, nor pictures or text which idealize artificial feeding.

**Exclusive breastfeeding** for six months as a global public health recommendation with continued breastfeeding for up to two years of age or beyond and the addition of **complementary foods** from the age of six months.

**Complementary foods** may not be marketed in ways that undermine exclusive and sustained breastfeeding.

**Financial sponsorship** from infant formula and infant foods companies creates conflict of interest for professionals working in infant and young child nutrition, especially with regard to the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.

## **Appendix B**

### **Our Promise to Families**

We aim to create a supportive, educated and encouraging environment for breastfeeding within Labrador-Grenfell Health.

- Our employees are prepared with up-to-date knowledge about breastfeeding.
- You and your family will learn about breastfeeding during pregnancy and after the birth of your baby.
- You and your baby will have uninterrupted skin-to-skin time in the first hour after birth.
- You will be helped to start breastfeeding as soon as your baby shows readiness.
- You will be encouraged to breastfeed whenever your baby wants.
- You will be encouraged to feed your baby breastmilk only.
- Your baby will not be given bottles or soothers.
- You and your baby will be in the same room throughout the day and night.
- If you have to be separated from your baby, you will be shown how to express your breastmilk, store it and ship it safely.
- You will be given information about community support and mother-to-mother support groups.
- You are welcome to breastfeed anytime, anywhere. If you would like privacy an employee will assist you.