



CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE

Breastfeeding: Antenatal Education and Counselling

This document should be read in conjunction with the [Disclaimer](#)

BFHI step 3 – inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding

Aim

To ensure all pregnant women attending KEMH receive appropriate information about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.

Key Points

1. Breastfeeding shall be discussed at antenatal clinics and antenatal classes^{1,2}.
2. An Interpreter service should be used at appointments for non-English speaking women.
3. The Antenatal discussions should include:
 - that breastfeeding is the normal way to feed and is important for the health of the baby.³
 - the benefits of breast milk to the baby and the associated risks of formula feeds.
 - the importance of early uninterrupted skin to skin contact.
 - early feeding cues and rooming in.
 - why teats and dummies should be avoided while breastfeeding is being established.
 - why formula should be avoided in the breastfed infant unless medically indicated
 - breastfeeding support services in the community e.g. Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA).
 - resources available i.e. State Health Information Resource Library at KEMH, Breastfeeding Centre of WA website
4. The KEMH Breastfeeding and Breast Care (insert link) booklet should be given to women at their antenatal booking visit to assist with the above education. This booklet also contains information on the benefits of breastfeeding and the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding
5. The [10 steps to Successful Breastfeeding \(WHO\)](#) are available in 16 different languages. Link
6. The [Australian Breastfeeding Association](#) fact sheets on breastfeeding topics are available in 12 different languages. Link
7. All mothers shall be asked by their health care provider, whether a doctor. or a midwife, about their breastfeeding knowledge/experience.

8. Antenatally, all women who have had previous difficulties breastfeeding shall to be offered the opportunity to be referred to a lactation consultant or community resource to discuss the previous issues
9. During pregnancy all women attending antenatal clinics shall be encouraged to attend breastfeeding education.
10. Women should also be informed of the Positioning and Attachment breastfeeding group sessions
11. Encourage women to attend the Breastfeeding workshops in the antenatal period that include the following key points:
 - Why breastfeeding is normal and is important for both maternal and infant health, nutrition and bonding.
 - The importance of support from partners and family ³
 - There can be some challenges in establishing breastfeeding; however, with appropriate support from suitably trained health professionals, the majority of them can be overcome.
 - Once established, that breastfeeding is more convenient and lower cost.
 - The risks associated with not breastfeeding.
 - The importance of interrupted skin to skin contact and the first feed.
 - Why 24 hour rooming in is important.
 - Why bottles, teats and dummies are discouraged while breastfeeding is being established.
 - That every breastfeed matters.
 - Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and that breastfeeding continues to be important after six months when other foods are introduced.
 - Basic breastfeeding and lactation management including positioning and attachment.
 - Feeding cues and frequency of feeding.
 - Indications the baby is getting enough milk.
 - Maintaining and increasing breast milk supply.
 - Breastfeeding support groups and services in the community.

References

1. BFHI Australia. **Standards for Implementation of the Ten Steps**,. Booklet 1, ed2009.
2. Britton C, McCormick FM, Renfrew MJ, Wade A, King SE. Support for breastfeeding mothers (Review),. **The Cochrane Collaboration**,. 2009(4).
3. Brown, A. What do women really want? Lessons for Breastfeeding Promotion and Education. **Breastfeeding Medicine** volume 11, number 3, 2016

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