TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is delivered to mothers of newborn infants and intends to impact the mothers and babies.

SUMMARY

The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) program is designed to champion, encourage, and help sustain breastfeeding at health care centers that provide maternity services in order to increase the well-being of the child and the mother.

EVIDENCE

A randomized controlled trial found that mothers in the BFHI program, compared to mothers in control groups, reported higher rates of (1) exclusive breastfeeding at 3 and 6 months; (2) any breastfeeding at all ages measured up to 12 months; (3) exclusive breastfeeding of the subsequent child for at least 3 months; and (4) the duration of any breastfeeding of the subsequent child. Infants in the program experienced lower rates of gastrointestinal infections and atopic eczema.

Observational studies conducted by research groups around the world have shown that BFHI participation is associated with increases in breastfeeding initiation, exclusivity, and duration and improvement in health outcomes in newborns; however, most studies lack a rigorous design and/or assess important short-term effects (e.g., breastfeeding initiation, exclusive breastfeeding for 90 days) rather than longer-term program effects. Evidence supporting each program step is summarized in Evidence for Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, which is accessible online at http://libdoc.who.int/publications/2004/9241591544_eng.pdf

COMPONENTS

BFHI represents a worldwide endeavor initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to promote breastfeeding in health care facilities. Participating health care facilities must be accredited to offer the BFHI program and are referred to as baby-friendly. These facilities comply with the WHO/UNICEF Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding guidelines:

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff.
2. Train all health care staff in skills necessary to implement this policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within a half-hour of the baby's birth.
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation even if separated from their infants.
6. Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breastmilk, unless medically indicated.
7. Practice rooming-in, which allows mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
9. Give no artificial teats or pacifiers, also called dummies or soothers, to breastfeeding infants.
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to these groups on discharge from the hospital or clinic.

PREVIOUS USE

More than 15,000 facilities worldwide, including 378 hospitals and birthing centers in 49 states and the District of Columbia in the United States, have received BFHI accreditation since 1991. Weed Army Community Hospital in Ft. Irwin, California, and Naval Hospital Jacksonville in Jacksonville, Florida, are baby-friendly military hospitals.
Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI)

TRAINING

The U.S. accrediting body, Baby-Friendly U.S.A., Inc., has created a four-phase training process, Discovery, Development, Dissemination, and Designation, to be completed by facilities seeking accreditation. Each phase may require up to 1 year to complete. U.S. hospitals typically pay $0, $3,300, $3,600, and $3,900 for each phase, respectively. Freestanding birth centers and small hospitals are charged smaller phase fees, and facilities that require over 1 year for phase completion pay larger phase fees. To achieve a Baby Friendly designation, facilities are required to verify policies, curriculum, action plans, quality improvement projects, staff training, and competency and complete a readiness interview and an on-site survey. Upon successful completion of this process, as determined by an onsite assessment, the facility will be granted a license to use the Baby-Friendly certification mark. Please visit www.babyfriendlyusa.org/get-started for additional details.

CONSIDERATIONS

Considerations for implementing this program include acquiring buy-in from hospital administration and maternity care staff, securing funding for the accreditation training and assessment processes and annual designation fees, and identifying highly motivated individuals to oversee the facility accreditation process (e.g., develop a work plan, implement policy changes, manage staff training, collect data) and annual quality improvement efforts.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

IMPLEMENTATION

If you are interested in implementing the BFHI program, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you! Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

TIME

Implementation time varies by site and depends on the number of women and infants receiving maternity care. 

COST

An assessment fee is required for accreditation and varies by site depending on assessor travel expenses. Once accredited, all facilities pay an Annual Designated Facility Fee of $1,250.

EVALUATION PLAN

To move the BFHI program to the Effective category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence at least one external evaluation must be conducted that demonstrates sustained, positive outcomes. This study must be conducted independently of the program developer.

The Clearinghouse can help you develop an evaluation plan to ensure the program components are meeting your goals. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

CONTACT

Contact the Clearinghouse with any questions regarding this program. Phone: 1-877-382-9185 Email: Clearinghouse@psu.edu

You may also contact Baby-Friendly U.S.A., Inc., by mail 125 Wolf Rd, Suite 311, Albany, NY 12205, phone 1-518-621-7982, fax 1-518-621-7983, or visit www.babyfriendlyusa.org/

SOURCE

www.who.int/nutrition/topics/bfhi/en/ and www.babyfriendlyusa.org/