

Press Release

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) 2010
1-7 August 2010



Towards A Baby-Friendly World

From 1-7 August 2010, the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), and breastfeeding advocates in more than 170 countries worldwide will be celebrating World Breastfeeding Week for the 19th year with the theme *“Breastfeeding: Just 10 Steps. The Baby-Friendly Way”*.

Research shows that the best feeding option globally is the initiation of breastfeeding within the first half hour of life, exclusive breastfeeding for a full six months and continued breastfeeding through the second year or beyond. Breastfeeding improves short and long term maternal and child health; and thus contribute to the attainment of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) 4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY and 5 IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH, to which many countries and agencies are committed.

UNICEF recently noted that the reduction of child deaths from 13 million globally in 1990 to 8.8 million in 2008¹ is partly due to the adoption of basic health interventions such as early and exclusive breastfeeding.

More and more studies have shown that implementation of the Ten Steps with continued postnatal support contributes to increased breastfeeding initiation and exclusive breastfeeding at the local, national and global levels.^{2,3,4}

Today, an estimated 28% of all maternity facilities in the world have at some point implemented the Ten Steps which has contributed to an encouraging increase in breastfeeding rates despite aggressive commercial promotion of infant formula and feeding bottles. However this is a far cry from the original goal of ALL maternity facilities practising the Ten Steps by 1995 as stated in the Innocenti Declaration (1990) on the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding which had outlined what countries should do to support breastfeeding.

Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding

Every facility providing maternity services and care for newborn infants should:

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 mothers about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within a half-hour of birth.
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed, and how to maintain lactation even if they should be separated from their infants.
6. Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breastmilk unless medically indicated.
7. Practice rooming-in - allow 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 them on discharge from the hospital or clinic.

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The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals and organisations concerned with the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide based on the Innocenti Declarations, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the WHO/UNICEF Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. Its core partners are International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), La Leche League International (LLL), International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA), Wellstart International and Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM). WABA is in consultative status with UNICEF and an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) | WABA, PO Box 1200, 10850 Penang, Malaysia | Tel: 60-4-6584 816 | Fax: 60-4-6572 655 | Email: wbw@waba.org.my | Website: www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org and www.waba.org.my

In 2005, fifteen years after the original Innocenti Declaration, the Innocenti+15 Declaration had called upon individuals, health care professionals, communities, governments and multilateral, bilateral organisations and international financial institutions to ensure that all women can succeed in breastfeeding.

In 2007, UNICEF and WHO completed an update and revision of the Baby-Friendly materials which acknowledge new research and experience, and suggest new approaches to Baby-Friendly beyond the maternity hospital in other health settings and in the community.

Action at community level is particularly important since globally only 56% of women deliver their babies in a health facility, (only 33% in the least developed countries) and they may be discharged within a day or two. Women need ongoing support in the community whether they deliver in hospital or at home.

Whilst rates of exclusive breastfeeding have increased in many countries, there has been stagnation or decrease in some, partly because reduced political support for BFHI and poor compliance with the Ten Steps in BFHI certified facilities.

Recent studies have shown that with more of the Ten Steps in place, the more likely women are to achieve their breastfeeding goals.⁵ This confirms that importance for every maternity, hospital, clinic and community to strive to increase the number of steps in place, even if they cannot achieve all ten steps immediately. Therefore every step counts!

**‘Let’s join hands in taking the reliable Ten Steps
to making this world
a Baby-Friendly World!’**

For further information:

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References:

¹ UNICEF State of the Worlds Children 2010

² Merten S, Dratva J, Ackermann-Liebrich U: Do baby-friendly hospitals influence breastfeeding duration on a national level? *Pediatrics* 2005, 116(5);e702-708

³ Abrahams SW, Lobbok M. Exploring the Impact of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative on Trends in Exclusive Breastfeeding, *Int Breastfeed J*, 2009 Oct 29;4(1):11

⁴ Saadeh R and Casanovas M, Implementing and Revitalising the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin* 2009, 30(2)p S225-9

⁵ Declercq E, Lobbok MH, Sakala C, O’Hara M. The impact of hospital practices on women’s likelihood of fulfilling their intention to exclusively breastfeed. *Am J Pub Health* 2009 May; 99(5):929.



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