



TEN STEP TUESDAY

Step 10: Referring to Community Support

It's Ten Step Tuesday!

This week is the LAST in a series on each of the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding that form the foundation of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.

STEP 10 – Coordinate discharge so that parents and their infants have timely access to ongoing support and care.



Rationale:

Mothers need sustained support to continue breastfeeding. Breastfeeding support is especially critical in the succeeding days and weeks after discharge, to identify and address early breastfeeding challenges that occur. Mothers encounter several different phases in production of breast milk, her infant's growth and her own circumstances (e.g. going back to work or school), in which she will need to apply her skills in different ways. Additional support will be needed. Receiving timely support after discharge is instrumental in maintaining breastfeeding rates. Maternity facilities must know about and refer mothers to the variety of resources that exist in the community.

Implementation Guidance:

Each mother should be linked to lactation-support resources in the community upon discharge. The AAP recommends that every infant should have an evaluation within 3 to 5 days of birth and within 48 to 72 hours after discharge from the hospital that includes an evaluation for feeding and jaundice. Breastfeeding newborns should receive formal breastfeeding evaluation, and their mothers should receive encouragement and instruction.

References: Above text from the 6th Edition of the BFUSA Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria. Baby-Friendly-GEC-Final.pdf (babyfriendlyusa.org)

For more information contact

Cara Gerhardt, BSN RN IBCLC, coordinator@high5kansas.org



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Vulnerable Populations:

Breastfeeding can be extremely challenging, especially if a mother is in a community at risk for not breastfeeding. Equity will be increased if competently skilled professionals and evidence-based breastfeeding counseling is accessible to all mothers. Populations at risk for lower rates of breastfeeding duration may include:

- African American/Black mothers
- young mothers
- those returning early to work outside the home (did you know...nearly 1 in 4 women in the U.S. return to work within 2 WEEKS of childbirth?! seriously.)
- mothers lacking social support
- mothers with mental or medical concerns
- parents with social and cultural considerations
- late preterm and early term infants

Knowledge of the existence of post discharge support can be instrumental in a mother's willingness to give breastfeeding a try. While breastfeeding mothers may have some particular concerns, it is critically important that support be provided to all mothers.

So what community resources do we refer to upon discharge?

- Lactation Help Line – 913-588-5640 – The lactation consultants can be reached via our office phone at any stage of breastfeeding. We love to hear from patients and help them navigate lactation-related challenges.
- WIC – Women's, Infants and Children. WIC offers breastfeeding support, as part of their mission to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk. WIC by provides nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating, as well as breastfeeding support and breast pumps.
- Consult the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition website for an up-to-date listing of support groups that might be close to home.
- We also may refer to some well-moderated online support groups, phone apps, websites, etc. What other resources do YOU know of?

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