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# Keeping abreast



## Good for baby, good for mum!

– the campaign continues

The HPA launched the second phase of its regional breastfeeding campaign on 1 February 2005. The campaign aims to highlight the benefits of breastfeeding and to help break down the social barriers which currently exist.

Running from 1 February through to 14 March 2005, phase 2 of the campaign involves rerunning the television and radio advertising originally launched in May 2004. Last year's bus advertising has been expanded and for the first time the campaign messages were conveyed both on the inside and outside of buses.

Since the first phase of the regional breastfeeding campaign in 2004, encouraging signs of changes in attitude have begun to emerge. Research carried out by the HPA showed that half of those

who had seen the posters with the strap line "Other people can eat here so why can't he?" had found it thought provoking and 7 out of 10 said they would now be more sympathetic towards breastfeeding mothers. Almost 7 out of 10 people who saw the television advertising also found it thought provoking.

If you missed the first run of the breastfeeding campaign, you can find the television and radio advertisements on the home page of [www.breastfedbabies.org](http://www.breastfedbabies.org) and posters are available from each Board Central Health Promotion Resource Service.

**Main photo (L-R):** Mum Joan Melanophy with baby Laura and Janet Calvert, Regional Breastfeeding Coordinator, HPA.

A new initiative:

# Breastfeeding welcome here!

A new regional initiative to support breastfeeding in public is to be launched during National Breastfeeding Awareness Week (8-14 May 2005). The idea for the *Breastfeeding welcome here* scheme came from a group of peer support mothers in North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust.

The scheme aims to encourage social acceptability of breastfeeding and increase awareness about the importance of breastfeeding to the health of both mother and baby. Previous research has shown that breastfeeding in public areas such as shops, cafés and restaurants is viewed by the public as embarrassing, yet mothers who breastfeed their babies while out and about can breastfeed discreetly and often completely unnoticed.

Breastfeeding mothers who are worried about breastfeeding in public will choose to stay at home rather than venture out with a baby who may need to be breastfed while out and sometimes give up



breastfeeding because of the lack of support and acceptance.

The *Breastfeeding welcome here* scheme will involve asking businesses to agree to abide by the membership criteria. These include:

- welcoming breastfeeding in all areas of the business open to the public;
- making all staff aware of the scheme and ensuring they are supportive of the needs of breastfeeding families;
- ensuring that a mother who is breastfeeding in an area of the business premises open to the public will not be asked to move to another area or to stop breastfeeding;
- providing non-smoking areas;
- displaying a window sticker and a certificate to make the public aware that the business is part of the scheme.

The scheme is backed by the Health Promotion Agency and the Breastfeeding Strategy Implementation Group, but the success of the scheme on the ground will



depend on breastfeeding mothers who are involved in support groups and in peer support initiatives being able to help identify local businesses that are supportive and encourage them to become members of the scheme. Once the scheme is up and running, mums will be able to find breastfeeding friendly businesses near them by checking a database of scheme members on the HPA's breastfeeding website [www.breastfedbabies.org](http://www.breastfedbabies.org)

Materials have been developed to support the initiative and briefing sessions will be held to explain how the scheme works and how we can help it succeed. Initially, information sessions about the scheme will be held for breastfeeding coordinators and leaders of breastfeeding groups from 11am-12.30pm on 11 April and 15 April.

**For full details, contact Janet Stange at the HPA on 028 9031 1611.**

## Support in your local community



Joan Bell, community midwife and Jane Kelly, health visitor, run a breastfeeding support group in Finaghy Health Centre called 'Breast Start'.

The group has been going for two years now and is one of 52 breastfeeding support groups which are now established throughout Northern Ireland. **Details of all the support groups are available on [www.breastfedbabies.org](http://www.breastfedbabies.org)**

The layout of the support section of the website has recently been updated to ensure easier access for mums. If you are setting up a new breastfeeding group or a postnatal group and would like details about your group put on the website, please contact Catherine Brown on 028 9031 1611 or email [c.brown@hpani.org.uk](mailto:c.brown@hpani.org.uk)

« **Main photo:** Community midwife Joan Bell, with some of the mums and babies at Finaghy Breast Start Club.



# A healthier future for babies

The new regional strategy for Northern Ireland entitled *A healthier future: a twenty year vision for health and wellbeing in Northern Ireland 2005-2025* sets out a vision for health and social care here over the next 20 years.

The importance of breastfeeding is highlighted in this document and is acknowledged as a key positive outcome for children. New breastfeeding targets have been proposed within the document as follows:

<b>Breastfeeding at one week after birth:</b>		
	50% by 2010	70% by 2025
<b>Breastfeeding at 6 months:</b>		
	20% by 2010	40% by 2025

These targets present a substantial challenge, particularly in regard to the continuation of breastfeeding beyond the first few weeks. However, they also provide important focus for breastfeeding and underpin the need to keep striving to improve breastfeeding promotion and support. The consultation period for *A healthier future* ends at 5pm on 25 March 2005 and a PDF of the document can be found at: [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/2004/healthfuture.asp](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/2004/healthfuture.asp)



## Peer support

Over 30 individuals, including breastfeeding coordinators, peer support workers, Sure Start workers and voluntary breastfeeding counsellors, attended a training day on peer support, held in Clotworthy Arts Centre in September 2004.



The visiting speakers – Marion McPhilips from Greater Glasgow Breastfeeding Initiative and Sarah Gill from La Leche League – provided excellent information on setting up and evaluating peer support programmes.

A new publication by the HPA entitled *Peer support as an intervention to increase the incidence and duration of breastfeeding in Northern Ireland: what is the evidence?* is now available on line at [www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/breastfeeding](http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/breastfeeding) in the publications section.

✧ Pictured here at the peer support training day are (L to R): Sarah Gill, Janet Calvert, peer support worker Aisling Ferris and her daughter Blinne, and Marion McPhilips.

## Baby scan photograph holders with breastfeeding message

Also new for 2005, as part of the campaign to raise awareness of the health benefits of breastfeeding, a holder has been developed for expectant mothers to keep their ultrasound scan photograph in.



As well as being a useful gift, the photograph holder also offers mums-to-be a brief summary of the health benefits of breastfeeding for mother and baby and details of where to get further information or advice. The new holders will be sent to all maternity unit outpatient departments by early April.



## New weaning leaflet

An updated version of the HPA leaflet *Weaning made easy: moving from milk to family meals* is in the final stages of production and will be distributed to the Central Health Promotion Resource Services of the four Boards in late March 2005.

The new leaflet reflects the recommendations on infant feeding issued last year by the Chief Medical Officer. These advise exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a baby's life and the introduction of solid foods at six months.

# New Certificate of Commitment awards



Causeway Health and Social Services Trust also received their certificates for both hospital and community services in October 2004.

Pictured above at the presentation are (left to right) *Elaine Doherty, Advocate for Health and Wellbeing Improvement, Investing for Health, NHSSB; Norma Evans, Chief Executive, Causeway HSST and Margaret Gordon, Director of Nursing, Causeway HSST.*

Progress towards Baby Friendly maternity services in Northern Ireland continues with two more Trusts receiving their UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative certificates of commitment at the end of 2004.

Down Lisburn Trust received their Certificate of Commitment for maternity and community services in December 2004. Lynda Vladeanu has been leading the initiative and has managed to coordinate the achievement of certificates of commitment throughout Down Lisburn Trust.

Pictured below: *Management and staff of Lagan Valley Hospital and friends share their achievement with a new mother and baby, Chairperson of Down Lisburn Trust, Denise Fitzsimons and Janet Calvert, Regional Breastfeeding Coordinator, HPA.*



## Update on the Breastfeeding Strategy Implementation Group

The Breastfeeding Strategy Implementation Group for Northern Ireland continues to meet three times a year and administration of the group is now facilitated by the HPA.

This group was established in 1999 and is both multi-disciplinary and multi-agency. Membership includes:

### Chairperson

*Dr Claire Willis*, Senior Medical Officer, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

### Members

*Gerry Bleakney*, Head of Health Promotion Commissioning, Eastern Health and Social Services Board

*John Breen*, Investing For Health Team, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

*Janet Calvert*, Regional Breastfeeding Coordinator, Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland

*Dr Carol Campbell*, Clinical Medical Officer, Paediatrics, Foyle Health and Social Services Trust

*Dr Brid Farrell*, Consultant in Public Health, Southern Health and Social Services Board

*Dr Brian Gaffney*, Chief Executive, Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland

*Catherine George*, Breastfeeding Counsellor, National Childbirth Trust

*Margaret Gordon*, Director of Nursing, Causeway Health and Social Services Trust  
*Margaret Kerr*, Midwife Lecturer, Queen's University Belfast

*Dr Carolyn Mason*, Nursing Officer, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

*Sarah McCann*, Assistant Coordinator of Professional Liaison, La Leche League

*Seana Talbot*, Regional Sure Start Coordinator, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

*Siobhan McIntyre*, Service Planner, Maternal and Child Health, Western Health and Social Services Board

One of the key aims of the group is to identify priority areas for implementation within the Breastfeeding Strategy for Northern Ireland. Priority areas for action for the Strategy Implementation Group in 2005-2007 are:

- supporting the development and ongoing provision of regional breastfeeding information and resources;
- encouraging implementation of the Baby Friendly Initiative best practice standards in hospital and community settings, and promoting the role of Trust Breastfeeding Coordinator;
- supporting breastfeeding education and training for all involved in the care of breastfeeding families;
- disseminating research on the health benefits of breastfeeding, and the potential links to reduction in female cancers and obesity prevention;
- raising public awareness of the importance of breastfeeding by encouraging ongoing support for a public information campaign;
- advocating for the development of effective locally based peer support initiatives;
- seeking improvements to the collection and collation of breastfeeding statistics;
- targeting health inequalities in the development of new and existing initiatives;
- seeking compliance with voluntary and statutory regulations relating to the marketing of breast milk substitutes, feeding bottles and teats.

# Research in brief



## Breastfeeding reduces health inequalities

There is considerable evidence indicating that breastfeeding in infancy is related to more favourable health outcomes in later life. Breastfeeding is more prevalent in affluent populations and therefore differences in infant feeding practices across the social spectrum may be contributing to health inequalities in later life.

The effect of socioeconomic circumstances on the relationship of infant diet to health outcomes has been studied by comparing children from non-manual social class families (I, II and IIIa) with children from manual classes (IIIb, IV and V).

The children had been previously recruited from the Dundee infant feeding study. All health outcomes were improved in the breastfed children. In the lower income families the outcome for the breastfed children was similar and even significantly better than the formula fed children from high income families.

*Summary of Professor Stewart Forsythe's abstract from UNICEF UK BFI Conference Glasgow, November 2004. Professor Forsythe will be speaking at the all-island breastfeeding conference on 17 May 2005 in the Waterfront Hall, Belfast.*

## Breastfeeding reduces blood pressure

Breastfeeding has been shown to cause a small reduction in blood pressure which could confer important benefits on cardiovascular health at a population level. The authors conducted a systematic review of published studies from which estimates of a mean difference (standard error) in blood pressure between breastfed and bottle fed subjects could be derived. Fifteen studies (17 observations) including 17,503 subjects were summarised.

Systolic blood pressure was lower in breastfed compared with bottle fed infants, a difference of  $-1.4$  mmHg. A small reduction in diastolic blood pressure was also associated with breastfeeding. The mechanism underlying this association is not yet clear, but findings such as these may provide insights into linking early life exposures with health in adulthood.

Martin RM et al. *Breastfeeding in infancy and blood pressure in later life: systematic review and meta-analysis*. *American Journal of Epidemiology* 2005;161:15-26.

## Baby Friendly hospitals increase breastfeeding rates

New research clearly shows that the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative is an effective way of increasing breastfeeding rates.

Participants included all 33 maternity units in Scotland and 464,246 infants born in Scotland between 1995 and 2002.

Breastfeeding rates were collected on the Guthrie Inborn Errors Screening card at 7 days of postnatal age and comparisons made between babies born in Baby Friendly hospitals and those born in hospitals which were not accredited as Baby Friendly.

Results showed that babies born in a Baby Friendly hospital were 28% ( $p < 0.001$ ) more likely to be exclusively breastfed at 7 days of postnatal age than those born in other

maternity units, after adjustment for mother's age, deprivation, hospital size, and year of birth. From 1995, breastfeeding rates had increased significantly faster in hospitals with Baby Friendly status by 2002: 11.39% (95% confidence interval 10.35 to 12.43) compared with 7.97% (95% confidence interval 7.21 to 8.73) for non-Baby Friendly hospitals.

The authors concluded that being born in a Baby Friendly hospital significantly increased the chance of being breastfed. Therefore, all maternity units should be encouraged to achieve Baby Friendly status.

Broadfoot M, Britten J, Tappin DM and MacKenzie JM. *The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative and breast feeding rates in Scotland*. *Archives of Disease in Childhood Fetal Neonatal Edition* 2005; 90(2): p. F114-F116.

## Breastfeeding best for preventing misaligned baby teeth

According to research based on detailed feeding histories and sucking patterns of 1,099 children aged between 3 and 5 years of age, babies who are given pacifiers/dummies and bottle fed are twice as likely to have misaligned milk or "baby" teeth as babies who are breastfed. Milk teeth will be replaced by permanent teeth, but the positioning and spacing of these teeth is increasingly thought to be crucial for correct jaw alignment and positioning of permanent teeth.

All the children studied had their mouths examined by a dentist. Breastfeeding seemed particularly to protect against the development of posterior cross bite, even when children sucked on pacifiers or thumbs. The authors

conclude that the sucking mechanisms for breast and bottle feeding are different, and that this therefore affects the development of the muscles of the mouth and face, and the palate.

*Breast feeding, bottle feeding, and non-nutritive sucking; effects on occlusion in deciduous dentition*. *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 2004; 89: 1121-3.



# » Safety concerns about Bromocriptine



producing hormone released by the pituitary gland.

However, recent concerns about the safety of Bromocriptine have arisen and while the drug is still licensed in the UK for the suppression of lactation, its licence for this purpose has been withdrawn in the USA, as there have been several reported cases of maternal deaths, seizures and strokes. Profound post-partum hypotension has also been reported.

If a mother expresses a wish to stop breastfeeding,

it is a good idea to find out if she really wants to stop or if she needs more help and support. This is particularly important if breastfeeding is painful, as the mother may need help to learn how to position and attach her baby well to achieve comfortable breastfeeding. In this instance the mother should be referred to a midwife or health visitor and put in touch with a trained breastfeeding counsellor.

If, however, a mother has definitely decided she wishes to stop breastfeeding, it is always advisable to encourage reducing the number of breastfeeds gradually. This should be done slowly over a period of several days. During this time comfort measures,

such as cold compresses, are soothing and oral analgesia can be used, eg paracetamol or ibuprofen. If the mother does not wish to continue putting the baby to the breast to feed, then milk can be expressed either by hand or pump. Stopping breastfeeding very suddenly can be extremely painful. It can also cause severe breast engorgement, mastitis and even breast abscess and is therefore not recommended.

If natural methods of suppressing lactation are found to be ineffective, then a drug known as cabergoline (Dostinex) may be a safer alternative to Bromocriptine.

Reference:

Hale T. *Medications and mothers' milk*. Pharmasoft Medical Publishing, 2004. ISBN 0-9636219-6-3

In the past, mothers have sometimes been prescribed medication to help them stop producing breastmilk.

The drug of choice has been Bromocriptine, otherwise known as Parlodel. This drug might have been prescribed in situations such as where a mother who was bottle-feeding was having difficulty suppressing lactation, or perhaps tragically for a mother whose baby had died. The drug has also been used if a mother wanted to stop breastfeeding very suddenly or if there was a problem with severe oversupply. This drug works by inhibiting the secretion of prolactin, the milk

## Breastfeeding really matters

An all-island breastfeeding conference

17 May 2005 at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast

The first ever all-island breastfeeding conference will take place on 17 May 2005 at the Waterfront Hall in Belfast. The theme of the conference will be "Breastfeeding really matters" and we are delighted to have Dr Nils Bergman, international expert on Kangaroo Mother Care, as our keynote speaker. As always, demand is expected to be high, so please return your booking form as soon as possible to ensure a place at the conference.

For full details see the programme accompanying this newsletter or view on [www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/breastfeeding](http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/breastfeeding) under publications. For application forms or queries, contact Janet Stange on 028 9031 1611 or email [j.stange@hpani.org.uk](mailto:j.stange@hpani.org.uk)



## Conferences and courses

### Breastfeeding updates

Beeches Post-graduate Nursing and Midwifery Education Centre

For information on next available dates and venues, contact Liz McGourty on 028 9056 1353.

### UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative conference

15-16 November 2005  
Bournemouth

To apply, contact Emily Robinson on 020 7312 7648 or visit [www.babyfriendly.org.uk](http://www.babyfriendly.org.uk)



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