

Media Release

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Baby Friendly Initiative: *Helping mothers to breastfeed their babies giving them the best start in life.*

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is raising awareness about the Baby Friendly Initiative.

The Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF in 1991. They launched BFI to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding because fewer mothers were breastfeeding. This was causing serious health problems for babies.

Hospitals and communities can become Baby-Friendly by following certain guidelines. These guidelines promote and support breastfeeding mothers and their family. Here are a few examples that hospitals and communities can take in becoming Baby-Friendly.

- Have a breastfeeding policy that all health care staff and volunteers know about.
- Train all health care providers about breastfeeding.
- Tell all pregnant women and their families why breastfeeding is normal for babies and important for families
- Give newborns only breast milk and no other food or drink, unless there are medical problems.
- Don't schedule baby's feedings and feed only breast milk for the first 6 months
- Make sure mothers know how to find breastfeeding support groups when leaving the hospital.
- Provide a welcoming setting for breastfeeding families.

The Baby Friendly Initiative benefits women, children, families and communities. Women learn that their bodies can provide safe and secure food that gives their babies the best start in life.

The Health Unit and local hospitals are now working towards becoming Baby Friendly. For more information please contact the Health Action Line 1-800-660-5853 or 613-345-5685 or visit <http://www.healthunit.org/children/feeding/bfi.html>

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