10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding

As a facility providing maternity services and care for newborns, you have a responsibility to help new mothers breastfeed successfully. Here is a simple list of ten steps to encourage successful breastfeeding.

1. Write a breastfeeding policy and routinely communicate this written breastfeeding policy to ALL healthcare staff.

2. Be sure all healthcare staff members are trained in the skills necessary to implement this written policy.

3. Inform ALL pregnant women about the benefits of breastfeeding and the management of breastfeeding.

4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth.

5. Show mothers not only how to breastfeed but also how to maintain lactation, even if they should be separated from their infants.

6. Unless medically indicated, give breastfed infants NO food or drink other than breast milk.

7. Allow mothers to practice rooming-in by letting them remain with their infants 24 hours a day.

8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand.

9. Avoid giving artificial teats or pacifiers to breastfeeding infants at ALL costs.

10. Establish and encourage breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to breastfeeding support groups upon discharge from the hospital or clinic.

To truly help moms breastfeed successfully, make sure you:

- Follow the steps listed above
- Encourage breastfeeding through education
- Share educational materials that promote breast milk instead of other infant food and drinks like formula
- Refuse to accept or distribute free or subsidized supplies of breast milk substitutes, nipples and other feeding devices

All of these steps will aid your healthcare facility’s efforts in encouraging breastfeeding.