

 <b>Swan Hill</b> District Health	<h2>Breastfeeding Policy</h2>
<b>Scope</b>	All staff
<b>Responsible Dept</b>	Health Promotion (BFHI Working Group)
<b>Authorised By</b>	Senior Management Team

### Purpose/Statement

Swan Hill District Health (SHDH) supports the UNICEF/WHO and NHMRC recommendations and actively promotes breast milk as the milk of best choice for infants until at least six months of age. Breast milk meets the specific needs of human infants and is therefore superior in comparison with all other available milks for human babies.

Breastfeeding is the natural and best method of feeding babies and should be encouraged, not forced, by all health professionals.

The method of feeding a baby is a choice that is made by the mother and supported by health professionals.

In line with Baby Friendly Health Initiative (BFHI), all personnel are expected to be familiar with, and adhere to this policy and the key aligned documents listed.

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### Guideline/Outcome

#### 1. Purpose and Scope

- To support the right of the parent's to make an informed decision about their infant's nutrition.
- To promote and support the successful initiation and establishment of breastfeeding.
- To work towards increasing the duration and success of breastfeeding.
- To standardise teaching, provide consistent advice and promote practices conducive to successful breastfeeding.
- To promote and meet the requirements of the "Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding" as developed by the Baby Friendly Health Initiative (BFHI) to achieve and maintain BFHI accreditation.
- To promote a philosophy of care that encourages the normal physiological pattern of breastfeeding for the newborn infant and offers support to maintain breastfeeding/lactation through any maternal or child illness episode.
- To provide the community, community groups and health professionals with a policy statement on breastfeeding.
- To provide breastfeeding support services to mothers and babies.

#### 2. Application of Policy

- **Antenatal Period**
  - Promote and educate families in the superiority and suitability of breast milk for newborns. Promote information sharing to contribute to raising community awareness of the importance of breast milk. Promote access to SHDH's Breastfeeding Support Service and Breastfeeding Policy and key aligned documents to all pregnant women.
- **Birth room**
  - Educate all attendants on mother-friendly labour and birthing practices and that any intervention to the birth process can affect breastfeeding outcome. Actively plan to minimise infant- mother separation immediately following birth. Promote early initiation of breastfeeding in the birth room.

- **Post natal Period**
- Promote 24hour rooming-in and baby led breastfeeding. Continue education on breastfeeding, expressing and storing breast milk. Promote SHDH's Breastfeeding Support Service and community contact with self-help groups such as Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA).
- **Complimentary feeds** whether boiled water, diluted formula, or formula, serves only to undermine maternal confidence, introduce an inferior alternative and cause confusion to both mother and baby and therefore are not offered to breastfeeding babies. Dummies are not recommended in the first 6 weeks of establishing breastfeeding.
- A limited amount of **Infant formula** is provided for emergency use or where there is a medical need. Mothers who choose to bottle feed are encouraged to supply a breast milk substitute of their choice. Single use disposable bottles are available for use during stay.
- SHDH is a **breastfeeding friendly workplace**. Employees are supported to combine breastfeeding and employment with a dedicated **space, time and support**.
- **Health service wide support**
- All departments of SHDH support and encourage breastfeeding. Treatments are planned to assist the breastfeeding family. Breastfeeding can occur in any department and is supported by staff. All breastfeeding queries to staff can be referred to the Breastfeeding Support Service or other local supports as required.

### Key Aligned Documents

- [Baby Friendly Health Initiative \(BFHI\) Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding Protocol](#)
- [Breastfeeding at Work Protocol](#)
- [Maternity – Breastfeeding The Healthy Term Newborn](#)
- [Supplemental feeding of new born babies and Acceptable Medical Reasons for the Use of Infant Formula Guidelines Protocol](#)

### Definitions:

**Baby Friendly Health Initiative (BFHI):** The BFHI is a unique global quality improvement initiative, developed jointly by WHO/UNICEF, aimed at creating an optimal environment for the promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding.

**"The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding"** are benchmarks by which a health care facility can appraise its current practices to measure its eligibility to be accredited as baby friendly. Each step is evidence based and achievable.

### Key Legislation, Acts & Standards

NSQHS (Second Edition) Standard 5 Comprehensive Care

### References

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Name	Position	Review Dates
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