

INFANT FORMULA: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

*A practice support tool for
healthcare professionals*



This resource is to be used in combination with *'Infant Formula: What You Need to Know'* booklet and the companion parent resource(s)

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

The *Infant Formula resource series* is an initiative of the Indigenous Health and Community Wellness Division of the Government of the Northwest Territories. This resource was adapted with permission from BFI Strategy for Ontario. The BFI Strategy is a partnership of the Michael Garron Hospital, the Best Start Resource Center and the Provincial Council for Maternal and Child Health. The Ontario version of this resource was funded by the Government of Ontario and released in 2017.

USING THIS RESOURCE

This resource series is intended to facilitate and encourage an open discussion with families who have made an informed decision to exclusively feed or supplement their baby with infant formula for medical and non-medical reasons.

As a health care professional (HCP), you provide families with unbiased evidenced-based information and support to make the best decision on how they will feed their baby within the family's unique context.

When parents and caregivers are supported to make informed decisions about infant feeding, their self-confidence and belief in their ability to safely care and respond to their infant is improved.¹ Maternal self-confidence, in particular, has been recognized as important in facilitating maternal role development, improving neonatal outcomes and promoting infant nurturing and development.²

Supporting informed decision making is part of trauma-informed practice and is contingent upon sensitive response to the experiences of the family and respect for their preferences. This is an important principle of family-centered maternity and newborn care (FCMNC)³ and the Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI)⁴.

“Trauma-informed services create safe environments that foster a sense of efficacy, self-determination, dignity, and personal control for those receiving care. Practitioners try to communicate openly, equalize power imbalances in relationships, allow the expression of feelings without fear of judgment, provide choices as to treatment preferences, and work collaboratively with clients”⁵

CONSIDER ASKING FAMILIES THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO OPEN THE CONVERSATION:

- “How is feeding going?”
- “How are you feeling about feeding your baby?”
- “Do you have any concerns about feeding your baby?”



STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO SUPPORT INFORMED DECISION MAKING:⁶

- **Ask about her decision to formula feed/supplement**
 - » “Before your baby was born, did you have a feeding plan?”
 - » “Have you spoken to your hcp about how you have chosen to feed your baby?”
 - » “Tell me about your decision to formula feed/supplement? Why is this best decision for you?”
- **Clarify feeding misconceptions to minimize potential for regrets later**
 - » “I just want to spend a couple minutes with you to make sure you have all the information you need to keep your baby as healthy as possible.”
 - » “I don’t want to change your mind, my role is to ensure you have a full understanding of the benefits, the risks, and all of the options you have about infant feeding.”
- **Support her decision to formula feed**
 - » “I am happy to help you with formula feeding”
 - » “I am hearing that you have given this some thought”
 - » “I support you. Here is some information...”
- **Review the ‘Infant Formula: What you need to know’ booklet**
 - » “Do you have any experience with baby formula?”
 - » “Here is a list of topics in the formula resource guide, let me know what you would like additional information about.”
- **Review that if using formula, there are a few items to consider in order to reduce the risks of formula feeding and keep her baby as healthy as possible**
 - » Families are assisted to choose what is acceptable, feasible, affordable, sustainable, and safe (AFASS)
- **Discuss ways that parents can bond with their baby including skin-to-skin, responsive cue-based feeding.**
 - » “Some mothers worry that if they don’t breastfeed, they won’t bond with their baby. Mothers can bond with their baby no matter how the baby is fed. Some examples are...”
- **Provide information about who to contact if she has questions, needs support or her feeding plan changes in the future.**
 - » “Feeding plans and the information you need may change over time. As your baby grows, there are individuals and resources to support you. Our team wants to ensure that you and your baby are strong and healthy.”

RESOURCES

- Baby-Friendly Initiative Strategy for Ontario YouTube Channel. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FlrFVh1SxVM>.
- Baby-Friendly Initiative Strategy for Ontario. (2017). Informed Decision Making: Having meaningful conversations regarding infant feeding. http://breastfeedingresourcesontario.ca/sites/default/files/pdf/Res_Strategy_BFI_Informed_Decision_Making.pdf.
- Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. (2011). Educational objectives and skills for the physicians with respect to breastfeeding. *Breastfeeding Medicine*, 6(2). <http://www.bfmed.org/assets/DOCUMENTS/abm-position-physician-education.pdf>.
- Step 2 Education. ES01 Breastfeeding Essentials (20 hr Curriculum) <https://step2education.com/courses.html>.
- Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario. (2006). Breastfeeding Educational Resources: Mother/Infant self-reflection guide for nurses and clinical case studies. http://rnao.ca/sites/rnao-ca/files/Breastfeeding_Educational_Resources_-_Self-Reflection_Guide_for_Nurses_and_Clinical_Case_Studies.pdf.
- ¹Ontario Public Health Association. Informed Decision-Making & Infant Feeding Position Paper. (2014). Retrieved March 28, 2018, from: <http://www.opha.on.ca/getmedia/9f1864f4-66e1-4a4e-8064-a547bdd45a59/Informed-Decision-Making-Infant-Feeding-OPHA-Position-Paper.pdf.aspx>.
- ²Shafaie F, Mirghafourvand M, Bagherinia M. (2017). The association between maternal self-confidence and functional status in primiparous women during postpartum period, 2015-2016. *IJWHR*. 5(3): 200-204.
- ³Public Health Agency of Canada. (2017). Chapter 1: Family Centered Maternity and Newborn Care in Canada: Underlying Philosophy and Principles. Retrieved March 28, 2018, from: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/healthy-living/maternity-newborn-care/maternity-newborn-care-guidelines-chapter-1-eng.pdf>.
- ⁴Breastfeeding Committee for Canada. (June 2017). The BFI 10 Steps and WHO Code Outcome Indicators for Hospitals and Community Health Services. Retrieved March 5, 2018 from: <http://www.breastfeedingcanada.ca/documents/Indicators%20-%20complete%20June%202017.pdf>.
- ⁵BC Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use Planning Council. (May 2013). Trauma-Informed Practice Guide. Retrieved March 5, 2018 from: http://bccewh.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/2013_TIP-Guide.pdf
- ⁶Baby-Friendly Initiative Strategy for Ontario. (2017). Informed Decision Making: Having meaningful conversations regarding infant feeding. http://breastfeedingresourcesontario.ca/sites/default/files/pdf/Res_Strategy_BFI_Informed_Decision_Making.pdf.