

What is Baby Friendly Status?

Full implementation of the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding and relevant articles of the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes (and its subsequent resolutions) as assessed by a BFHI assessment team is required. The criteria and standards for each Step and Code can be found on the BFHI Ireland web site. <http://www.babyfriendly.ie/resources.htm>

The WHO/UNICEF Global Award requires a minimum exclusive breastfeeding rate of 75% of mothers are breastfeeding their babies on discharge home. The Baby Friendly Ireland National Award will be given when less than 75% are exclusively breastfeeding on discharge.

Maternity facility must agree to:

- Designate a contact person for BFHI and to notify the BFHI national co-ordinator if this person changes.
- Have a multidisciplinary / multi area BFHI team/committee in the facility that meets regularly.
- Collect annual breastfeeding statistics and audit compliance with their breastfeeding policy, and make changes to practices if needed to ensure standards continue to be implemented.
- Provide a yearly report to the BFHI national co-ordinator including breastfeeding statistics, action plan and evaluation of action plans.
- Act as a model for other maternity services and share their experiences through journal articles, posters, presentations, sharing of guidelines developed and similar activities.
- Participate in monitoring visits, which provide support for the maintenance of BFHI best practice standards.
- Be re-assessed after the initial award in line with current re-assessment process. If the reassessment shows that any of the standards are no longer being fully implemented the facility is required to act to bring practices back into line with the requirement of the BFHI. The re-assessment may be charged to the facility.
- Abide by the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant resolutions of the World Health Assembly, and ensure that the Baby-friendly award or hospital status is not used to market products covered by the Code. This includes that hospital employees will not use the hospital name if they are involved in a personal capacity in any marketing activities of products covered by the Code.
- Cease to use the designation as a Baby-friendly Hospital if due to falling standards that are not remedied, the National BFHI Committee informs the facility that the award has been withdrawn.

The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) is a global project of the World Health Organisation and UNICEF that recognises that implementing best practice in the maternity service is crucial to the success of programmes to promote breastfeeding.

The BFHI can be viewed as a quality initiative implementing research based best practices. The successful implementation of the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding ensures that the facility supports and promotes informed parental choice through the provision of appropriate, accurate and unbiased information and discussions.

A newsletter, *BFHI Link*, provides information on the objectives of the Initiative, methods of implementing supportive practices in hospitals/maternity units and details of events relating to BFHI. Each issue addresses a specific topic and includes a separate sheet that can be used as a handout for parents. If you would like to find out more email contact@babyfriendly.ie or visit the BFHI in Ireland web site at <http://www.babyfriendly.ie/>