



Community Standards on Breastfeeding Promotion

Members of the Central Ohio Hospital Council (COHC) strongly believe that women should exclusively breastfeed or provide breast milk to their newborns for a minimum of six months following birth, in order to achieve the best health outcomes for mothers and their babies. In order to better educate pregnant women who are being cared for by a Franklin County hospital on the importance of breastfeeding, the hospital systems have developed this set of community-wide standards. They provide a valuable framework as local hospital systems review and revise their internal policies around breastfeeding promotion. It is important to note that, throughout this document, the term “breastfeeding” is used; however our hospitals advocate that mothers who give their newborns breast milk after pumping are providing them with great health benefits. These principles were developed at the direction of the Board of Directors of the Central Ohio Hospital Council, were adopted by the Board on February 13, 2013, and will take effect community-wide on June 1, 2013.

Purpose Statement

COHC-member hospitals support the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and other professional healthcare organizations that mothers should breastfeed or provide breast milk to their newborns for a minimum of six months due to a number of benefits to both mother and baby:

- Breastfeeding protects babies from infections and illnesses that include diarrhea, ear infections, pneumonia, and inflammatory bowel syndrome.
- Breastfed babies are less likely to develop asthma, and are less likely to be readmitted to the hospital for other illnesses.
- Children who are breastfed for six months are less likely to become obese, and have a reduced chance of developing type 2 diabetes.
- Breastfeeding reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Mothers who breastfeed have a decreased risk of breast and ovarian cancers.



Hospital Policies on Breastfeeding Education, Care

Franklin County hospitals will develop or review current policies to ensure adequate and effective education of parents -- both in the acute-care and prenatal settings -- on the importance of providing breast milk to their babies.

In developing the policies and in reviewing and revising the policies going forward, hospitals will:

- Obtain input from a multidisciplinary team, including nursing, pediatricians, lactation consultants, patients, and others involved in the care of pregnant women and their babies, so that the effective methods can be developed to educate parents on the importance of breastfeeding;
- Review the most recent studies on the health and cost benefits of breastfeeding infants;
- Consider feedback from local pregnant women on their perceptions of breastfeeding, through a survey conducted by the Central Ohio Hospital Council, in coordination with other local OB providers.

After developing the policies, hospitals will routinely communicate them to all healthcare staff and physicians who are involved in the care provided to pregnant women and to their newborns in the hospital setting.

Hospitals will ensure that all healthcare staff involved in the care of pregnant women and their newborns in the hospital setting have adequate knowledge and the skills necessary to provide breastfeeding education and care.

Education of Mothers in the Hospital Setting

Hospitals will strive to educate all pregnant women seen in the acute care and the prenatal settings on the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding for both mothers and their babies.

Hospitals will strive to provide mothers who choose to breastfeed with assistance with breastfeeding techniques within six hours of birth and throughout her stay in the hospital.

Hospitals will facilitate mothers of preterm or ill babies in collecting breast milk.

Hospital Practices that Encourage Breastfeeding

Hospitals will strive to place all healthy, full-term babies in their mother's arms within 30 minutes of birth for at least an hour, unless a medical reason arises or unless the mother has stated alternative wishes. Hospitals will strive to initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth, unless a medical reason arises or unless the mother has stated alternative wishes.

Hospitals will strive to assure that newborns are exclusively given breast milk, unless a medical reason arises or unless the mother has stated alternative wishes.

Hospitals will not routinely provide free samples of or coupons for infant formula to mothers.



Hospitals will encourage mothers to “room in,” or remain with their newborns in the mother’s room for 24 hours a day.

Hospitals will strive to educate all parents – in the acute care and prenatal settings – on common infant feeding cues. Hospitals will ensure that staff involved in the care of pregnant women and their newborns in the hospital setting have adequate knowledge on typical infant feeding cues.

Hospitals will not offer pacifiers or artificial nipples to infants, unless the mother has stated alternative wishes. Pacifiers may be offered during painful medical procedures for pain management.

Hospitals will educate parents who choose to breastfeed on community breastfeeding support resources prior to their discharge.

The “Community Standards on Breastfeeding Promotion” are in place in the following hospitals:

Mount Carmel Health System

Mount Carmel East Hospital
Mount Carmel West Hospital
Mount Carmel St. Ann’s Hospital

Nationwide Children’s Hospital

The Wexner Medical Center at the Ohio State University

OhioHealth

Doctors Hospital
Dublin Methodist Hospital
Grady Memorial Hospital
Grant Medical Center
Riverside Methodist Hospital

Adopted by the COHC Board of Directors on Feb. 13, 2013.

