The Baby Friendly Health Initiative in Ireland (BFHI) - health promotion and quality care

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Baby Friendly Health Initiative
In Ireland since 1998

Started as part of the Health Promoting Hospitals Network (WHO)

- Health Promotion “Settings” approach (Ottawa Charter)
  A supportive environment that:
  - Makes the healthy behaviour the easy behaviour
  - Protects from promotion of less healthy behaviours

- Support for health facilities as well as assessment of standards
Expansion with HPH

- Breastfeeding Supportive Health Service Workplace
- Breastfeeding Supportive Paediatric Unit
- Breastfeeding Supportive Whole Hospital
- Then major restructuring of the health service resulted in the loss of the HPH Network, and the expansion areas ceased.
- BFHI eventually found a new structure:
- Now an independent registered charity with a volunteer governance committee.
All mothers, All babies, All facilities

- All maternity facilities can participate.
- They carry out an annual structured action plan including evaluation, and submit report to BFHI Coordinator.

Since 2006 Ireland has included the criteria related to:
- Breastfeeding supportive birth practices (Mother Friendly Care)
- Support for informed decision making and skills education for parents of babies who are not breastfeeding.
BFHI leads in quality

- BFHI was the first health quality programme in Ireland to have measureable standards and external assessment.
- Now actions as part of BFHI participation can provide evidence of meeting national health care quality standards – thus linking BFHI to newer quality programmes.
25 Years of global BFHI
18 years of BFHI in Ireland

Achievements

BFHI practices are integral to:
• National Infant Feeding Policy, strategies and action plans
• Induction of new staff to policy
• Midwifery training and CPD

Routine practice includes:
• Antenatal discussion and charting
• Skin to skin contact immediately
• Staff skilled in assisting feeding
• Baby and mother together
• Responsive feeding - Baby-led cues
• On-going supports
• Some access to IBCLCs

Not breastfeeding in hospital is now the minority
Hospitals designated as meeting Baby Friendly criteria Aug 2016

Participating hospitals not yet meeting criteria

9 out of 19 maternity units are assessed as meeting Baby Friendly criteria

43% of births take place in a Baby Friendly facility.

National Breastfeeding Action Plan target is that all facilities are Baby Friendly by 2025.
BFHI in Ireland assists by:

- BFHI Link newsletter 3-4 times a year:
  - research-based practice information
  - parents’ handout
  - sharing from other hospitals
- Support and Advocacy for best practices
- Assessment, Audit tools, Plans, W’shop
- Highlights of achievements

www.babyfriendly.ie

- National coordinator of BFHI (part-time)
A good start for babies and mothers makes a difference

A strong Baby Friendly Initiative helps make it happen