

# Promoting the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding



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## INTRODUCTION:

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends all mothers to breastfeed their babies exclusively from birth to 6 months and to continue breastfeeding with complementary foods up to 2 years or longer. Penang Adventist Hospital is the first private hospital in the Northern region of Peninsula Malaysia to be accredited as Baby Friendly Hospital. In the past 8 years, the hospital has made a conscious effort to promote breastfeeding by enforcing the "10 steps to successful breastfeeding", as recommended by WHO/UNICEF Innocenti Declaration in 1990.

## METHOD/PURPOSE:

One way to promote a health behaviour such as breastfeeding is through education. Thus, PAH introduces the Antenatal Course which consists of 10 contact hours, spread over 4 days. The goals of the course are first to prepare first time mothers mentally and psychologically to nurse and take care of their baby. Secondly to impart skills and knowledge that will enhance the mother's overall ante-natal experience.

## RESULTS

Our antenatal courses have received positive feedback so far. In 2013, we educated 94 couples, of whom 80% were PAH patients. 97% of them were first time parents. Mothers learnt how to nurse their baby by using a mannequin where they were taught how to carry and position their baby during breastfeeding. Other well-received hands-on components are: a) the Prenatal & Relaxation Exercises where husbands are taught how to give their partners a back massage during labour to help them relax. b) The Baby Bath demonstration where couples learn first-hand how to bathe a newborn baby. c) Diaper practice: fathers-to-be learn to bathe babies and change their nappies.

## CONCLUSION

Our entire pediatrician team at the hospital is fully committed to helping mothers breastfeed their babies. The course is taught by an interdisciplinary team which includes obstetrician & gynecologists, pediatricians, anesthesiologist, dietician, lactation nurse, physiotherapist and health educators. Many other services have been added on over the years to promote and encourage the continuity of exclusive breastfeeding. The antenatal course is the first step towards helping our pregnant patients adopt a health promoting practice that is good for both mothers and child.

## COMMENT

The Antenatal Course covers a wide range of topics besides breastfeeding; it includes delivery and care of the new born. For example:

- Pain Relief in Labour
- Video on Epidural Anaesthesia
- Prenatal & Relaxation Exercises
- Breathing Techniques in Labour
- Immunization & Minor Problems during infancy
- Baby Bath Demonstration

Participants appreciate the practical aspect of the course. Health education such as this empowers our patients to go through the child labor experience and beyond (care of new born, breastfeeding etc) with pertinent knowledge and skills.

**Step 1:**



Have a written policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff

**Step 2:**



Train all health care staff in skills necessary to implement the policy

**Step 3:**



Inform all pregnant women of the benefits and management of breastfeeding

**Step 4:**



Skin-to-skin contact with their mothers immediately after birth for at least an hour. Encourage demand feeding.

**Step 5:**



Show mothers how to breastfeed and maintain lactation even if they are separated from their infants

**Step 6:**



Give newborns no food or drink other than breast milk unless medically indicated

**Step 7:**



Practice rooming-in - allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day

**Step 8:**



Encourage Breastfeeding on Demand

**Step 9:**

~~Pacifiers~~  
~~奶嘴~~

~~Bottle~~  
~~奶瓶~~

Give no artificial teats or pacifiers to breastfeeding infants

**Step 10:**



Set up breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge



Prenatal & Relaxation Exercises



Hands on practice for fathers-to-be on how to change diapers



Hands on practice for mothers-to-be on how to bathe babies



Prenatal class participants supporting breastfeeding

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