



**Canadian Association of Midwives /
Association canadienne des sages-femmes**

POSITION STATEMENT ON BREASTFEEDING

The Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM) advocates for breastfeeding as the optimal method of infant feeding with significant benefits for both mother and child, and recognizes its overall value and importance to public health. CAM endorses recommendations that infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life, and that breastfeeding ideally should continue after other foods are introduced.

Midwives provide information for parents about breastfeeding that is current and evidence-based. Midwives advocate for breastfeeding by promoting its benefits and advantages, while supporting the mother as the primary decision-maker. Midwives educate, counsel, and provide clinical and psychosocial support to women and their families in order to facilitate a smooth transition to early and continued breastfeeding. Midwifery care in the postpartum period includes home visits and individualized assistance to mothers learning to breastfeed. Midwives work collaboratively with other health professionals to promote and facilitate successful breastfeeding, and may refer their clients to certified lactation consultants as needed.

CAM endorses the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding of the World Health Organization (WHO)¹ which states that: “Breastfeeding is an unequalled way of providing ideal food for the healthy growth and development of infants; it is also an integral part of the reproductive process with important implications for the health of mothers.” CAM encourages member professional associations and midwives to promote local, provincial and federal strategies that facilitate a supportive breastfeeding environment within institutions and communities. CAM and its members will encourage other health professionals and hospitals to adopt strategies incorporated in the WHO Global Strategy, including the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative and the WHO Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.

CAM will continue to seek opportunities to participate in initiatives to improve successful and on-going breastfeeding for the well-being of Canada’s babies and families.

¹ http://www.who.int/child-adolescent-health/New_Publications/NUTRITION/gs_itycf.pdf

Links to WHO policy and information on breastfeeding:

Nutrient adequacy of exclusive breastfeeding for the term infant during the first six months of life:
http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/nut_adequacy_of_exc_bfeeding_eng.pdf

The optimal duration of exclusive breastfeeding: a systematic review:
http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/optimal_duration_of_exc_bfeeding_review_eng.pdf

The optimal duration of exclusive breastfeeding:
http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/optimal_duration_of_exc_bfeeding_report_eng.pdf

Evidence for the ten steps to successful breastfeeding:
http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/evidence_ten_step_eng.pdf

International Code of Breast-milk Substitutes:
http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/code_english.pdf

Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative:
<http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/bfhi/en/index.html>