

# WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK (1-7 AUGUST 2022)



## ***FOCUS: Breastfeeding Friendly Hospitals in India (BFHI-India)***

<https://bfhi-india.in/>

### **OBJECTIVES OF WBW 2022**

1. To draw attention of policy makers and programme managers to the importance of breastfeeding friendly hospitals in India.
2. To encourage hospitals with maternity facilities to adopt breastfeeding friendly practices.
3. To advocate that health and nutrition care providers are trained in lactation management skills needed to counsel and support women during the hospital stay.



# WHY FOCUS ON BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY HOSPITALS?

The MOHFW-Government of India, WHO and UNICEF recommend i) initiation of breastfeeding within one hour of birth, ii) exclusive breastfeeding (only breastfeeding, nothing else) for the first six months of life and iii) continued breastfeeding till 2 years of age or beyond along with appropriate complementary feeding after six months of age. Optimal feeding has the potential to simultaneously reduce the burden of under-nutrition and overweight, obesity or diet-related non communicable diseases (NCDs) including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some cancers.

An international study [i] on cost of not breastfeeding estimates that in India inadequate breastfeeding results in 100,000 preventable child deaths (mainly due to diarrhoea and pneumonia), 34.7 million cases of diarrhoea, 2.4 million cases of pneumonia, and 40,382 cases of obesity in India. Health impact on mothers is more than 7000 cases of breast cancer, 1700 of ovarian cancer and 87000 of type- 2 diabetes and India spends US\$ 106.05 million on health care due to illness.

Despite the unparalleled value, the breastfeeding rates remain low in India. According to the World Health Organisation, there is substantial evidence that implementing the 'Ten Steps' in maternity hospitals significantly improves breastfeeding rates. A systematic review of 58 studies [ii] on maternity and newborn care published in 2016, clearly showed that observance of the 'Ten Steps' impacts early initiation of breastfeeding immediately after birth, exclusive breastfeeding and total duration of breastfeeding.

## Results of Inadequate Breastfeeding: India (Annually)

### Preventable Child Deaths

**100,000**

### Cases of Diarrhoea

**34,791,524**

### Cases of Pneumonia

**2,470,429**

### Cases of Obesity

**40,382**

### Cases of Breast Cancer

**7,976**

### Cases of Ovarian Cancer

**1,748**

### Cases of Type II Diabetes

**87,855**

### Health Care Costs

**\$ 106.05 million**



Source: <https://www.aliveandthrive.org/en/country-stat/india>

[i] Dylan D Walters, Linh T H Phan, Roger Mathisen, The cost of not breastfeeding: global results from a new tool, Health Policy and Planning, Volume 34, Issue 6, July 2019, Pages 407–417, <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czz050>

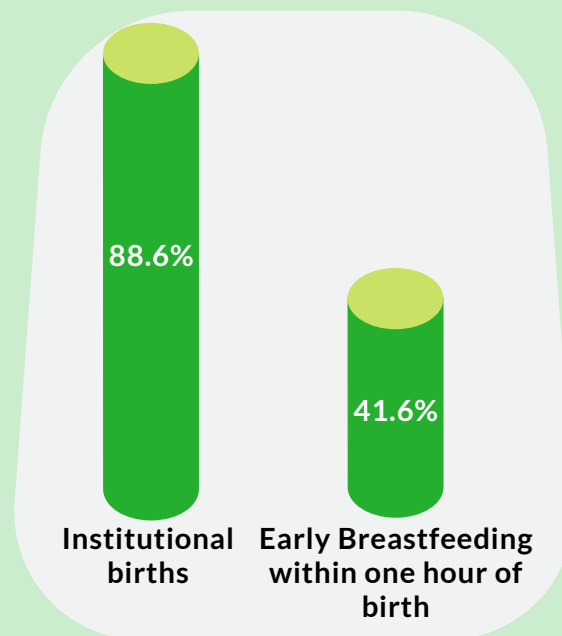
[ii] Rafael Pérez-Escamilla, Josefa L. Martinez, Sofia Segura-Pérez; Impact of the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative on breastfeeding and child health outcomes: a systematic review; First published: 29 February 2016; <https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.12294>

# GAPS.CHALLENGES.BARRIERS

The NFHS-5 [iii] in 2021 data revealed that 88.6% women deliver in hospitals, but only 41.6% are able to begin breastfeeding within an hour of birth. Initiation of breastfeeding within one hour of birth has slowly increased from 9.5% in NFHS-1 (1992-93) to 41.6 % in NFHS – 5 (2015-16). However, in 18 states and Union Territories, early breastfeeding rate has declined. Comparing NFHS-4 and NFHS-5 early breastfeeding rate is stagnant, which is a matter of great concern. It demonstrates unsupportive health care system.

There is scope for improvement in the rates of early breastfeeding within an hour of birth provided we support all mothers (vaginal and cesarean births) and remove the barriers that exist.

According to a 2019 World Bank study “Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) in South Asia: Implementing Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding. India, Nepal and Bangladesh, Challenges and Opportunities”[iv], in India, BFHI does not receive the attention it needs.



## Challenges reported in this study include:

- lack of ownership and funding of BFHI,
- inadequate human resources,
- overburdened health facilities,
- weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms,
- inability to involve private hospitals,
- ineffective implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (the Code) and
- lack of proper mechanisms to provide technical support and leadership.

## Barriers

At the maternity hospital level, separation of babies from mothers especially in cesarean section births, more so in the private sector; inadequately trained health staff; unnecessary use of infant formula due to commercial influence of baby food industry on health facilities; and inadequate counselling and support to mothers during antenatal and postnatal periods were found to be some of the additional barriers to success of BFHI implementation. In India, cesarean sections have increased substantially in last 5 years, now at 47.4% in private and 14.3% in public sector (NFHS 5 2019-2021), which certainly leads to failure of breastfeeding as mothers do not get the support they need to succeed.

Both the MAA programme of MOHFW Government of India and the WHO guidance with the revised “Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding” urge hospitals implement the Infant Milk Substitutes Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act 1992, and Amendment Act 2003 (IMS Act), and have a written feeding policy, data management system, competent staff (by training in breastfeeding counselling), provision of antenatal counselling on breastfeeding and support at birth to initiate breastfeeding, breastfeeding friendly practices like rooming-in, avoiding foods other than breastmilk unless medically indicated etc.

However, the MAA program does not reach out to private sector hospitals.

[iii] [http://rchiips.org/nfhs/NFHS-5\\_FCTS/India.pdf](http://rchiips.org/nfhs/NFHS-5_FCTS/India.pdf)

[iv] <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/91689157311241173/pdf/South-Asia-Baby-Friendly-Hospital-Initiative-in-South-Asia-Implementing-Ten-Steps-to-Successful-Breastfeeding-India-Nepal-and-Bangladesh-Challenges-and-Opportunities.pdf>

# THE NEW HOPE - BFHI INDIA

To support women in their breastfeeding journey and improve breastfeeding practices at hospital level it is imperative to have breastfeeding friendly hospitals. The Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) has partnered with Association of Health Care Providers of India (AHPI) to launch the accreditation programme for Breastfeeding Friendly Hospitals, and this is being supported by 13 professional organisations. This has a focus on private hospitals to improve standards of care for early breastfeeding and skin to skin contact within an hour of birth .

This programme is coordinated by BPNI and uses the tools developed and tested in partnership with MOHFW and WHO under the guidance of a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) chaired by the then Commissioner Child Health, MOHFW in 2019.

A national accreditation centre has been established that promotes its services of accrediting health facilities with maternity services at an affordable cost. The centre is hosted at BPNI and offers its technical advice and services to the willing hospitals with maternity services all over India. The accreditation process requires Self-assessment and an independent external assessment of the health facilities.. Once accreditation is received, it remains valid for 3 years.It has been officially launched in 2021. Till date it has accredited 2 maternity hospitals and has enrollments from 20 hospitals across India. Its steadily gaining momentum.

**BPNI and AHPI encourage hospitals with maternity services to apply for accreditation, please click [HERE https://bfhi-india.in/home.php](https://bfhi-india.in/home.php)**

A screenshot of the BFHI India website's registration form. The browser address bar shows 'bfhi-india.in/register\_hospital.php'. The page has a navigation menu with links: Home, About BFHI, National Accreditation Centre, Accreditation, Authorised Assessors, Supporting Partners, Resources, and Contact us. Below the menu is a progress bar with steps: Registration (highlighted in orange), Application, Self Assessment Payment, Self Assessment, External Assessment Payment, External Assessment, and External Assessment Result. The main form is titled 'Hospital Details' and contains input fields for: Name of Hospital, Street Address, City/Town, District, State, and Pincode.



# WHO'S TEN STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL BREASTFEEDING?

## Critical management procedures:

- 1a. Comply fully with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and relevant World Health Assembly resolutions.
- 1b. Have a written infant feeding policy that is routinely communicated to staff and parents.
- 1c. Establish ongoing monitoring and data-management systems.
2. Ensure that staff have sufficient knowledge, competence and skills to support breastfeeding.

## Key clinical practices:

3. Discuss the importance and management of breastfeeding with pregnant women and their families.
4. Facilitate immediate and uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact and support mothers to initiate breastfeeding as soon as possible after birth.
5. Support mothers to initiate and maintain breastfeeding and manage common difficulties.
6. Do not provide breastfed newborns any food or fluids other than breast milk, unless medically indicated.
7. Enable mothers and their infants to remain together and to practise rooming-in 24 hours a day.
8. Support mothers to recognize and respond to their infants' cues for feeding.
9. Counsel mothers on the use and risks of feeding bottles, teats and pacifiers.
10. Coordinate discharge so that parents and their infants have timely access to ongoing support and care.( WHO, 2022)



# ACTION IDEAS

- Highlight the gap in institutional delivery and early breastfeeding rates in each State and reach out to media. Resources are available <https://www.bpni.org/world-breastfeeding-week-2022/>
- Identify a hospital with maternity facility in your area and introduce the Breastfeeding Friendly concept to them. Download the the brochure and poster here. <https://bfhi-india.in/home.php>
- Organise webinar/seminar or a meeting, to make local hospitals aware of the 'Breastfeeding Friendly' Hospital accreditation programme. Ask for support from BPNI.
- Call upon your District Magistrate to encourage all hospitals to go for accreditation as Breastfeeding Friendly.
- Write a letter to the State government, your area Member of Parliament, and political party to call for support to BFHI India
- Demand from the maternity hospitals to have competent staff in lactation management and breastfeeding counselling



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<https://www.youtube.com/user/bpniindia>



[idecide4me](https://www.instagram.com/idecide4me)

## ABOUT BPNI

The Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) is a 30 years old registered, independent, non-profit, national organisation that works towards protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding of infants and young children. BPNI works through policy analysis, advocacy, social mobilization, information sharing, education, research, training and monitoring the company compliance with the IMS Act. BPNI serves as the global secretariat for World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi) programme, that analyses policy & programmes and galvanises action at country level in different regions of the world. BPNI is part of the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)

## BPNI's ETHICAL POLICY

BPNI does not accept funds or any support from the companies manufacturing baby foods, feeding bottles or infant feeding related equipments. BPNI does not associate with organizations having conflicts of Interest. BPNI request everyone to follow this ethical stance while celebrating World Breastfeeding Week.

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