Breastfeeding support

LIVE WEBCHAT SERVICE OPENS

We have recently expanded our online breastfeeding supports on our website www.breastfeeding.ie to assist mothers and mothers-to-be. If you are working with clients who may be thinking of becoming pregnant or who are pregnant or if you or a family member are pregnant you can get support and information on breastfeeding. The new supports include an extended Ask our Expert service with a live Webchat service provided by International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs), a new HSE Breastfeeding Facebook page, and breastfeeding support videos featuring health care professionals and parents of breastfeeding babies.

www.breastfeeding.ie provides answers to many of the common questions Mums have, whether they are thinking about breastfeeding, just getting started or are well on their way with a growing baby. For those Mums who have a specific query, there is also the option to email your question to a Lactation Consultant via the Ask our Expert service or through Webchat.

The newly launched HSE Breastfeeding Facebook page provides a community of support for mothers to join where they can receive information and tips from the Ask our Expert Lactation Consultants. The new Irish breastfeeding videos on www.breastfeeding.ie provide guidance for mothers on topics such as positioning and attaching baby, expressing milk and what to expect in the early days. This focus on an engaging mothers with information and enabling them to overcome challenges they may be experiencing.

Our on-line support is non-judgemental, respecting mother’s decisions and encouraging and supporting them. The website directs mothers to local health services and breastfeeding support groups, of which there are over 260 across the country. All contact details and times are on www.breastfeeding.ie/support/ and some of these groups are facilitated by hospital and community Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs), Public Health Nurses, while others are organised by trained breastfeeding support volunteers. All aim to be breastfeeding mums. They are a great source of information, support and friendships. Our aim is that the new supports will reach more mothers and improve access to user friendly breastfeeding help and information.

In Ireland, 57% of mothers are breastfeeding their babies on discharge from maternity hospitals (HSE, 2008). In the first few days and weeks at home, mothers may experience challenges which often prompt them to stop breastfeeding sooner than they planned.

Breastfeeding support is provided by maternity services by public health nurses, and voluntary breastfeeding organisations in the community.

Some of the common questions Mums have are:

- Is it okay to stop breastfeeding?
- How do I know when my baby is hungry?
- Should I be waking my baby to breastfeed?
- How to encourage breastfeeding

Dr. Deirdre Horsfall, Director of Health and Wellbeing said: “The evidence in relation to breastfeeding and health is now stronger than ever and the potential for improved health outcomes for women and children in Ireland is substantial. We are working to promote, support and protect breastfeeding. We want to encourage more mothers to start breastfeeding and to breastfeed longer. The on-line service on www.breastfeeding.ie is part of the range of the supports available to provide practical information and support to help mothers to breastfeed their babies. The HSE website www.breastfeeding.ie provides answers to the common questions mums have whether they are thinking about breastfeeding, just getting started or well on their way with a growing baby,” said Sibbhan Mountjoy, National Breastfeeding Coordinator.

For those mums who have a specific query, there is also the option to email your question to a Lactation Consultant via the Ask our Expert service or through Webchat. The new HSE Breastfeeding Facebook page provides a community of support for mothers to join with input and information from the Ask our Expert Lactation Consultants. The new Irish breastfeeding videos on www.breastfeeding.ie are provided guidance for mothers on topics like positioning and attaching baby, expressing milk and what to expect in the early days.