



How To Have a Breastfeeding Friendly Practice

As the breastfeeding rates in the US increase, there is now, more than ever, a need for health professionals who are able to care for and support breastfeeding families in their practice. Here are a few suggestions for how to have a breastfeeding friendly practice:

- Display breastfeeding supportive signs and educational materials
- Avoid distributing free formula, coupons, or formula-sponsored promotional materials to mothers who have chosen to breastfeed
- Encourage exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life whenever possible, and discourage inappropriate supplementation.
- Advertise that you are a “breastfeeding friendly” practice and encourage mothers to breastfeed in the office.
- Have a “triage” system in the office for all breastfeeding-related calls.
- Employ a lactation consultant in the office who potentially can help increase breastfeeding rates of the practice. Although a lactation consultant cannot bill at the same professional level as a physician, she often can bill commensurate with her background (i.e., nurse or dietitian). If the baby is being seen for another reason, the visit can be associated with the physician professional fee where appropriate. See the *Breastfeeding and Lactation: The Pediatrician’s Guide to Coding*, www.aap.org/breastfeeding/initiative/documents/PDF/CODING.pdf. for help.
- Have a room within the office space dedicated to “breastfeeding-related issues.”
- Keep a stock of breastfeeding supplies for the mother (breast pads, nipple shields, nipple cream, accessories for breast pumps, etc.). Depending on insurance practices in the area, breastfeeding supplies can be charged to the child’s bill if the mother is not separately registered as a patient.
- Have breastfeeding reference books available, particularly one which describes compatibility of breastfeeding with the mother’s medications.
- Have resources available which list electric breast pump rental locations and community support groups.
- Have a system in place in which mothers of all breastfeeding infants are automatically given a prescription for vitamin D with an associated information sheet per the AAP protocol.
- Know the laws in your state about breastfeeding and/or expressing milk at work and be able to support the mothers in your practice to continue to breastfeed after returning to work.

Additional Resources

These resources will help you to get started on becoming a breastfeeding friendly practice.

- **Breastfeeding: Baby’s First Immunization**

A poster from the AAP designed to promote the importance of breastfeeding as the first immunization and the need for children to receive all recommended immunizations.

www.aap.org/breastfeeding/initiative/documents/PDF/BFIZPoster.pdf

- **Supporting Breastfeeding Mothers as They Return To Work**

This article was written to help physicians to understand how to support mothers as they return to work breastfeeding.

www.aap.org/breastfeeding/initiative/documents/PDF/BFArticle.pdf

- **Ten Steps To Support Parents’ Choice To Breastfeed Their Baby**

This poster will give you a more in depth list of ways to ensure that your practice is supportive of breastfeeding families.

www.aap.org/breastfeeding/initiative/documents/PDF/tenSteps.pdf