

# Breastfeeding Policy Summary

*The Northern Health Region (NHR) believes that breastfeeding is the best way to feed a baby because there are many health benefits for both the mother and her child. The purpose of this policy is to help staff create a positive and supportive breastfeeding environment and for mothers to receive clear information to help them make an informed choice as to how they feed their baby. Here is a summary of the NHR's breastfeeding policy which is based on the Baby Friendly Initiative's 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding and the World Health Organization (WHO) International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.*

1

**Have a written breastfeeding policy.**

2

**Ensure all health care workers have the knowledge and skills to use the policy.**

3

**Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and process of breastfeeding.**

4

**Right after birth, baby is placed skin-to-skin on the mother's chest for at least an hour or however long the mother wishes with no interruptions.**

5

**Show mothers how to breastfeed and maintain lactation should they be separated from their baby.**

6

**Support mothers to only give their baby breastmilk for the first six months unless supplements are needed for medical reasons.**

7

**Allow mothers and babies to remain together 24 hours a day. All teachings and procedures are done at the bedside. Encourage mothers to breastfeed or hold their baby skin-to-skin before, during and after blood tests and needles.**

8

**Encourage mothers to feed their baby when baby shows signs of interest. Support mothers in providing only breastmilk for the first six months and then solid foods while continuing to breastfeed for two years and beyond.**

9

**Support mothers to feed and care for her breastfeeding baby without the use and promotion of pacifiers or artificial nipples.**

10

**When discharged from hospital, have a follow-up plan for the mother and baby. Maintain and promote a breastfeeding culture by encouraging moms to take part in a variety of programs and services.**

**Meet standards of the WHO *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* by not providing samples of formula, and not advertising formula, bottles, or pacifiers to mothers. Health care workers must educate mothers on making an informed choice on how they plan to feed their baby.**

The Code