

Nicollet County Public Health Breastfeeding Policy

Policy:

It is the policy of Nicollet County Public Health that breastfeeding will be promoted to the community and clients of Nicollet County Public Health as the standard for optimal infant nutrition and development. Nicollet County Public Health will work to achieve the *Ten Steps to a Breastfeeding Friendly Health Department*.

Purpose:

Breastfeeding has been shown to be the superior form of infant nutrition. Breastfeeding offers significant health, social, and economic benefits to families and the community. For the healthy, full-term baby, breastmilk is the only food necessary until the baby shows signs of readiness for solids. The *Ten Steps to a Breastfeeding Friendly Health Department* process has been shown to increase the capacity of health departments in Minnesota to promote breastfeeding in the community.

Procedure:

1. Public Health Director, Women Infants, and Children (WIC) Coordinator, Family Health Public Health Nurses, and WIC staff will serve on the Nicollet County Public Health Breastfeeding Work Group to (a) assist in policy implementation, (b) lead the effort to become a Breastfeeding-Friendly Health Department and (c) review and revise the department policy annually to reflect current evidenced-based practice.
2. All staff providing care and/or education for the mother-baby dyad will become familiar with the breastfeeding policy and will be responsible for acquiring the skills and the knowledge necessary to support policy implementation including maternal education, community resource awareness, and legal protections for nursing mothers, including Federal and Minnesota State Statutes.
3. Nicollet County Public Health will support continuing education as merited to keep staff current with best practices.
4. The Breastfeeding Work Group will review and update resources for client education, including racially and ethnically diverse resources within the community.
5. Nicollet County Public Health will provide content expertise and technical assistance to community partners to promote and support breastfeeding as the “norm” in the community.
6. Expectant mothers will receive education about the benefits of breastfeeding and how to prepare to breastfeed at WIC appointments and pre-natal visits.
7. Mothers will be offered lactation support services after their baby is born through home visits, telephone consultation, WIC appointments, and referral to other agencies in the community as needed.
8. Nicollet County Public Health will provide a space for clients, visitors, and Nicollet County staff to breastfeed in accordance with Federal and Minnesota State Statutes.

The Ten Steps for Breastfeeding Friendly Health Department

1. Establish a designated individual/group to lead the effort become a breastfeeding-friendly health department.
2. Have a written breastfeeding policy.
3. Coordinate support and promotion to establish breastfeeding as the “norm” in the community.
4. Collaborate with community partners to ensure access to breastfeeding classes.
5. Educate the community on breastfeeding support.
6. Encourage racially and ethnically diverse resources within the community.
7. Support mothers in initiating and maintaining breastfeeding for 12 months and beyond.
8. Encourage local public places to provide a breastfeeding-friendly environment.
9. Select businesses each year and provide workplace lactation support training.
10. Facilitate access to information and training for local childcare centers to support breastfeeding.