



CIMS Coalition for Improving Maternity Services

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CDC Recognizes Link Between Birth Practices and Breastfeeding

The Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS) welcomes the inclusion of the Maternity Care Practices in the CDC's new *Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions*. This publication follows a strong new policy statement in support of Breastfeeding from the American Academy of Pediatrics last winter, *Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk*.

The link between childbirth and breastfeeding is a hallmark of CIMS's own Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative (MFCI), whose Tenth Step lists the steps of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative. The evidence-based Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative (MFCI) was adapted as a model for the World Health Organization's *Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding*.

Research shows that breastfeeding is vital to the short and long term health of babies and mothers. Birth practices such as induction, epidural anesthesia, episiotomy, and cesarean section can make breastfeeding more difficult. Furthermore, hospital procedures that separate mothers and babies can interfere with the establishment of breastfeeding. This *Guide* acknowledges the importance of keeping mother and baby together during the birth and in the hours and days after birth for a successful breastfeeding relationship.

“For the CDC to come out this strongly on the affect of maternity practices on breastfeeding is fabulous. This is the first time a US government policy document has linked birth practices to breastfeeding, and may be one of the first policy documents that addresses some of the MFCI steps clearly,” said lactation consultant Linda Smith, IBCLC, and a CIMS Board member.

Ms. Smith collaborated with the late Mary Kroeger, CNM, on *Impact of Birthing Practices on Breastfeeding*, which examines the research about this important link.

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For more information about the *Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions*, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/>.

The AAP's *Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk* can be found at <http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/breastfeeding.cfm>

To learn about the Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative, go to <http://www.motherfriendly.org>

The WHO's *Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding* can be found at <http://www.who.int/nut/#inf>

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The Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS), a United Nations recognized NGO, is a collaborative effort of numerous individuals, leading researchers, and more than 50 organizations representing over 90,000 members. Promoting a wellness model of maternity care that will improve birth outcomes and substantially reduce costs, CIMS developed Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative in 1996. A consensus document that has been recognized as an important model for improving the healthcare and well being of children beginning at birth, the Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative has been translated into over a dozen languages and is gaining support around the world.