

Innovation

Using scientific research to shape nursing practice, building knowledge that moves the discipline of nursing forward and enhances the care of people, families, as well as the community.

Embracing the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative

When a mother holds her baby in her arms for the first time, she may be overcome with joy as she vows to provide her child with the best start in life. MUSC employees are doing their part making it that much easier for parents by embracing the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI).

The journey to earn Baby-Friendly designation began in June 2012 when MUSC was selected as one of 89 hospitals out of 235 applicants to become a member of Best Fed Beginnings, a nationwide effort helping hospitals improve maternity care.

BFHI is a global program recognizing hospitals and birthing centers offering optimal levels of care for infant feeding, as well as promoting bonding between mothers and their children. MUSC officially achieved this designation in September 2013. At that time, only 3 percent of hospitals across the nation had earned this designation. MUSC is the first academic medical center in South Carolina, as well as the first of the 89 hospitals part of the Best Fed Beginnings Collaborative to attain this designation. As of December 2013, 170 U.S. hospitals and birthing centers in 40 states and the District of Columbia were designated as Baby-Friendly. These facilities implement a set of evidence-based maternity care practices using the Tens Steps to Successful Breast-feeding:

1. Have a written breast-feeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff.
2. Train all health care staff in the skills necessary to implement this policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breast-feeding.
4. Help mothers initiate breast-feeding within one hour of birth.
5. Show mothers how to breast-feed and maintain lactation even if separated from their infants.
6. Do not give infants food or drink other than breast milk unless medically indicated.
7. Practice rooming-in allowing mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
8. Encourage breast-feeding on demand.
9. Do not give pacifiers or artificial nipples to breast-feeding infants.
10. Foster the establishment of breast-feeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge.