



TEN STEP TUESDAY

Step 7: Rooming in

It's Ten Step Tuesday!

This week is the 7th in a series on each of the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding that form the foundation of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.



STEP 7 – Enable mothers and their infants to remain together and to practice rooming-in 24 hours a day.

Rationale:

- Rooming-in is necessary to enable mothers to practice responsive feeding, as mothers cannot learn to recognize and respond to their infants' cues for feeding if they are separated from them.
- When the mother and infant are together throughout the day and night, it is easy for the mother to learn to recognize feeding cues and respond to them.
- This, along with the close presence of the mother to her infant, will facilitate the establishment of breastfeeding.

Implementation Guidance:

- Facilities providing maternity and newborn services should enable mothers and their infants to remain together and to practice rooming-in throughout the day and night.
- Staff need to visit the hospital room regularly to ensure the babies are safe. Mothers recovering from a C-section will need help with lifting their baby from the bassinet.
- Babies should only be separated from their mothers for justifiable medical and safety reasons.
- Minimizing disruption to breastfeeding during the stay in the facility will require health-care practices that enable a mother to breastfeed for as much, as frequently and for as long as her baby needs it.
- If preterm or sick infants need to be in a separate room to allow for adequate treatment and observation, efforts must be made for the mother to recuperate postpartum with her infant, or to have no restrictions for visiting her infant.

References: Above text from the 6th Edition of the BFUSA Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria. Baby-Friendly-GEC-Final.pdf (babyfriendlyusa.org)

For more information contact

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Our opportunity to model safe sleep practices

The hospital setting is the perfect place to role model safe rooming-in and to help families plan for a safe breastfeeding and sleep environment for home. It is a prime opportunity to educate mothers and families about the components of a safe environment which includes but is not limited to:

- Mothers and infants have close but separate sleep surfaces.
- Infants are placed on their backs to sleep, for naps and at night.
- Firm flat sleep surface is used in a safety-approved crib, covered by a fitted sheet.
- Soft bedding and objects are avoided. Do not put pillows, blankets, sheepskins in baby's sleep area.
- Baby is dressed in sleep clothing. Loose blankets are not used, and baby is not over bundled.

Medically Justifiable or Safety-related Reasons for Separation

Healthcare Professionals must use their clinical judgement. While it is true that rooming-in is the expected practice in Baby-Friendly designated facilities, we recognize some circumstances necessitate mother-baby separation. The decision that leads to a separation is often complex involving observations, assessments, and an understanding of the individual mother-baby dyad. It is imperative in these situations that care and decisions are individualized and include the mother's participation, if possible. Facilities should have a dedicated area to provide care to infants who have a justifiable reason for separation. BFUSA does NOT require that facilities close their nursery. To be clear, infants must not be separated for routine facility procedures that could be performed in the mother's room.

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