

ISLINGTON GENERAL PRACTICE GUIDE to INFANT FEEDING



Islington is committed to maintaining its status as a **UNICEF Baby Friendly accredited borough**, where mothers and families with young children are offered evidence-based, effective and consistent information and support about feeding their children, enabling them to give their children the best start in life.

Islington provides **training** for staff at all levels to empower us to achieve that goal. This guide gives details of **the free e-training for GPs**, as well as **contact details** for accessing infant feeding support and **useful resources** about infant feeding designed for staff and/or parents. It also includes a summary of Islington's **[Infant Feeding policy](#)**, which sets out the ways in which we can support good feeding, A parents' guide poster and flyer is available, and the full policy is available and updated on the Whittington Health intranet.

Contact Islington's Infant Feeding Coordinator (IFC)
to book on-site training, or with any queries
Tel: 0203 316 8441 **Email:** rosemarybrown1@nhs.net

E-Training for GPs – free – giving CPPE/CPD points – OPPORTUNITY FINISHING SOON!

UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative has an online training package to update GPs with all the information they require to support mothers. It covers how breastfeeding works, how to treat common breast conditions (e.g. mastitis, thrush) and prescribing drugs for breastfeeding mothers.

The **web-based package** takes approximately **25 minutes** to complete and can be accessed many times, either at home or at the practice. Once the course is completed, you can print off a certificate for your **CPPE / CPD** portfolio.

To access this training, log in to

<http://progress.babyfriendly.org.uk/gptraining>

Then enter the username: rosemarybrown1@nhs.net and the password: w4ASwa4U . You will then be asked to enter your GMC number and details. On completion of the training, the Infant Feeding Coordinator is informed so as to maintain the database UNICEF requires.

Alternatively, the Infant Feeding Coordinator (IFC) is willing to come to individual practices and present, if that is preferred.

The IFC also runs monthly workshops on breastfeeding, bottle-feeding and starting on solids for staff, and also training on using the new DH/WHO growth charts and other topics. GPs or practice staff are very welcome to attend. Contact the IFC for more details (p1).

GP Infant Feeding Network website & Facebook page

There is now a GP infant feeding network closed **Facebook page** run by GPs for GPs and others interested in infant feeding. And a new website – [The GP Infant Feeding Network \(UK\) | Advocating for Best Practice in Infant Feeding](#).

Also a **useful article for GPs**: [‘When a breastfeeding mother walks through your door’](#)

Global Health Media provide [excellent short videos](#) for mums & professionals about breastfeeding – available in several languages and downloadable/viewable on phones, tablets or computers

Islington mum-to-mum (peer) support

Islington commissions the Breastfeeding Network charity to train and provide on-going supervision and training for Islington mums who have breastfed themselves, to enable them to help other mums. We have some paid and some volunteer supporters.

Most breastfeeding problems begin with ineffective positioning and attachment, so please do **refer** mums you see, so that we can complement your support and get breastfeeding going well again.



The peer supporters provide support through:

- **9 drop-in support sessions** in children's centres each week
- visiting the **postnatal wards** at ULCH & the Whittington each morning to help Islington mums and their babies
- phoning all breastfeeding mums around Day 3 to offer support. Depending on the mother's need and ability to access drop-ins, support may be given by phone, in the drop-ins, or by a home visit
- some **baby and antenatal clinics** and other groups.
- manning the national breastfeeding helpline

Mums can drop in to any group, refer themselves or be referred by ringing the Peer Support Coordinator.

**To refer for Islington mum-to-mum (peer) support:
contact the Peer Support Coordinator
on 0203 316 8439 or email via
whh-tr.IslingtonBreastfeedingPeerSupport@nhs.net**

For out of hours help: National Breastfeeding Helpline
(9.30am-9.30pm 7 days a week) : **0300 100 1212**

Islington Breastfeeding Welcome scheme

Although equality legislation now gives women the right to breastfeed anywhere, many breastfeeding mothers report receiving negative comments and reactions when breastfeeding in public places. As a result, many either only breastfeed when at home, taking formula for when out and about, or even give up breastfeeding earlier than they otherwise would. This is particularly true for the women who are most at risk of health inequalities and who are least likely to breastfeed.



So Islington has adopted the [Breastfeeding Welcome Spaces](#) scheme, whereby health and children's centres, GP practices, council offices, shops, cafés and restaurants, parks and leisure and entertainment facilities can commit to clearly welcoming mothers to breastfeed on their premises by:

- * displaying Breastfeeding Welcome stickers and posters – available from IFC
- * orientating staff about the reason for the scheme and how they can facilitate mothers and their babies and defend their right to breastfeed if other clients make comments
- * thinking through how to provide some privacy for mums who may request this. This does not necessarily mean special equipment or facilities, but maybe arranging furniture to provide a quieter corner, or offering a room that is not in use at the time.

At present over [120 places in Islington](http://www.breastfeedingwelcomescheme.org.uk/) have signed up. Mothers can go onto the Breastfeeding welcome website to input their postcode and find out BFW places near them - <http://www.breastfeedingwelcomescheme.org.uk/>

There is also a local **Facebook** site where new venues are described and where mothers can meet and discuss – <https://www.facebook.com/breastfeedingislington>.

Since mothers with young babies are in frequent contact with GP practices, **please contact us** to **SIGN UP** your practice to the scheme. For more information and to enquire about joining the scheme, see the Breastfeeding Welcome spaces hyperlink above and **contact the Infant Feeding Coordinator** on 0203 316 8441.

Islington breastfeeding prevalence

At present data about breastfeeding prevalence is collected at birth and at the **6-8 weeks developmental check** to show breastfeeding prevalence in Islington. This information is:

- a key Public Health Framework outcome indicator, submitted to the NHS England & PHE every quarter.
- used to **justify investment** in breastfeeding peer support and other initiatives to support good child feeding in Islington, so robust information is vital.
- a child **safeguarding** issue, as children who miss the check are often the most vulnerable, and only knowing defaulters can enable us to follow them up effectively.

For GPs, this means ensuring that the slip for the 6-8 week check from the child's **Personal Child Health Record (“Red book”)** is completed with the feeding information at the check (and also the immunisations) and returned to the Child Health department promptly. You may arrange to do this through the health visiting team connected with your practice, or directly to the Child Health Information Dept, Old Nurses' Home, Magdala Ave, N19 5NS.

Without this information, such investment may be at risk and Islington will be penalised.

Breastfeeding and medication

Only rarely does a mother need to be advised not to breastfeed because of medication she requires. Usually there is a drug that is perfectly safe in breastfeeding. The Breastfeeding Network charity has a pharmacist with a PhD in medication and lactation, who has prepared [factsheets](#) on different kinds of medication and is ready to answer questions not covered in the factsheets via email or phone (see link above). Another website is the [drugs in lactation](#) website

Sore nipples, mastitis, colic and reflux

Poor attachment of the baby at the breast is the most common cause of all these problems. Ensuring mums get skilled support to correct attachment can resolve many issues without any need for medication. **Please refer** mums to our Islington breastfeeding support – **0203 316 8439** - the [flyer](#) here gives further details

Tongue tie

Statistics suggest that 1 in 10 babies may have some degree of tongue tie. The baby's tongue needs to be mobile to enable adequate attachment at the breast and effective milk removal. Around half of babies with tongue tie will not experience any difficulty in feeding as a result, but for the other 50%, consequences may include painful nipples and mastitis in the mother, slipping off the breast and clicking sounds at the breast and inadequate weight gain, colic and reflux in the baby. Division of the tongue tie can make a real difference, along with intensive help from breastfeeding support to ensure the baby gets enough milk before the procedure and learns to attach effectively after the procedure.

Referrals can be made to the Royal Free, the Evelina children's hospital, or, for babies born at UCLH, to UCLH. Each require an assessment of breastfeeding to be done before referral. If you do not feel able to do this, please refer the mother to one of the breastfeeding support groups. For a **referral form** ([Royal Free](#), [Evelina](#), [UCLH](#)), an **information sheet** for [health professionals](#) and one for [parents](#), click the hyperlinks here.

Starting on solids

Islington's [Milk and More pack](#) brings together the most current information on feeding children – breastfeeding, formula feeding,

starting on solids, putting together a healthy meal and oral health - for us to use (and training materials). It also provides useful contacts and resources, and gives information covering questions parents commonly ask, such as about food intolerance, choking and Healthy Start. A [recipe book](#) accompanies the pack, with hard copies available from the IFC.

Islington also produces 4 leaflets for families about **starting on solids** and feeding children under 5 years, available from the IFC:

- [‘Milk & More: starting your baby on solid food’](#)
- [‘Drinks for children up to 5’](#)
- [‘Snacking’](#), including healthy snacks, how to encourage healthy eating habits and prevent and manage fussy eating
- [‘Vitamins and minerals’](#), detailing actions of different micronutrients and the best food sources

PDFs of **Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, French, Somali, Spanish and Turkish** translations are available via the Infant Feeding Coordinator

[First Steps Nutrition Trust](#) also has excellent, colourful resources about feeding babies and young children, and for mothers as well. These are freely downloadable and viewable.

The Department of Health also produces very good leaflets:

- [‘Off to the best start’](#) – about breastfeeding
- [‘Introducing solid foods’](#)
- [‘Guide to bottle feeding’](#), including making up feeds, sterilising equipment and practising responsive and paced bottlefeeding

Healthy Start vitamins

Vitamin D is largely obtained from the action of sunlight on skin, so that a child or adult may have a healthy, balanced diet and still be deficient. Our lifestyle, geography and other factors make it more difficult to achieve adequate exposure to sunlight.

In 2017 the SACN report recommended that, as a precaution, babies under one year of age should be given a supplement of 8.5 to 10µg/d vitamin D per day from birth, and children aged 1-4 years should be given a supplement of 10µg/d. Pregnant women and new mums should take a vitamin D supplement of 10 µg daily. The

present Healthy Start vitamin drops are not licensed for use before 1 month, so the Department of Health is working on a new preparation that should be available late 2018. In the meantime, the recommendation is to start from 1 month of age.

Islington, Camden and Haringey have a high incidence of vitamin D deficiency, with two child deaths related to deficiency in the last few years. In view of this, the local recommendation is that **all** babies and children under 4 should be offered Healthy Start vitamin drops from 1 month, whether breast or formula fed, unless the practitioner is convinced that the mother was vitamin D replete during pregnancy.

Islington and Camden provide Healthy Start drops **FREE** for **all children under 4**, and the Healthy Start tablets (folic acid and vitamin D) for **all women trying to get pregnant, pregnant and in the first year postnatally**. The vitamins are available at most children's centres and health centres throughout Islington, with families registering at these centres for a Healthy Start card enabling them to collect the vitamins at [any of these centres](#). If families are on low income and receiving the DH Healthy Start food and vitamin vouchers, they should take the voucher with them to collect the vitamins, so that we can claim back the cost from the Department of Health.

Formula feeding

Whilst we seek to support all mothers to breastfeed, we realise that some will, for various reasons, choose to formula feed entirely, or mix breastfeeding with formula. A huge variety of baby formula milks are available as powder or ready made milk in cartons and plastic bottles. It can be very confusing for parents, especially when formula companies make claims without any independent evidence to back them up, and constantly bring out new formulas.

The evidence shows that the most appropriate formula for **all** babies up to 1 year are the **first formulas**, with no advantage to any particular brand (but significant cost differences). The First Steps Nutrition Trust (FSNT) independently review all the evidence for all the milks and [FAQs](#) - updated regularly. There is no reason to use "hungry baby", follow on or toddler formulas – a baby can start cow's

milk at 1 year, and can use cow's milk in food from 6 months. Soya milks are also not recommended, especially for babies less than 6 months. Many babies with cow's milk intolerance are also intolerant of soya and goat's milk. FSNT also reviews [specialist formulas](#). The evidence for milks claiming to manage colic and reflux ("comfort" or "anti-reflux") or prevent allergies is not robust so they are not recommended.

Formula feeding poses a potential risk, so it is vital that parents know to make up one feed at a time, **using boiled water at least 70°C** to kill any bacteria in the powder, ensuring the right amount of powder to water, and throwing away any feed not used. Parents are also encouraged to follow the baby's feeding cues and offer feeds responsively, to avoid overfeeding. It is also important for the baby to be held close to the carer, with eye contact during the feed, and pacing the feed to give the baby opportunity to show they have had enough.

The DH leaflet '[Guide to Bottle feeding](#)' gives detailed guidance. For an [Islington powerpoint](#) summarising the types of milk and guidance, click the hyperlink. UNICEF also has a very useful [summary sheet](#).

Using leaflets or promotional gifts or materials from or sponsored by infant milk or food companies

Islington's [Infant Feeding policy](#) stipulates that we all avoid using any leaflets or promotional materials produced by baby milk or baby food companies, accepting their hospitality or attending their sponsored educational seminars. This is in line with the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, is a requirement of Baby Friendly accreditation, and aims to ensure we give only independent evidence-based information. Any infant milk or food company representatives must always approach the IFC first.

**Contact Islington's Infant Feeding Coordinator (IFC)
with any queries**
Tel: 0203 316 8441 Email: rosemarybrown1@nhs.net

Islington's Infant Feeding Policy – a summary for staff

Islington aims to provide information and support to enable all parents to confidently feed their babies. Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed babies. It provides ideal food and drink, significantly protects babies and their mothers against illness, and contributes to good development. In Islington we aim to fully support mothers to breastfeed successfully.

To achieve this involves all of us being committed to:

- talking with mums and families antenatally about the difference breastfeeding makes to health, and how to get started
- helping breastfeeding mums know how to (or signposting to help):
 - guide their babies to attach well at the breast
 - look for the signs that show their babies are getting enough milk
 - express their breastmilk by hand and know how that might help
 - breastfeed when out and about, and know about Breastfeeding Welcome places in Islington and elsewhere
 - maintain breastfeeding when going back to work
- welcoming mothers to breastfeed in all NHS & children's centre premises, offering some privacy should mums request that
- encouraging breastfeeding mums to avoid using teats, dummies and nipple shields (at least in the first 6 weeks) or giving formula or other foods or fluids, to avoid interfering with breastmilk supply and successful breastfeeding (unless medically advised)
- signposting mums to the skilled support that is available to help them breastfeed and get through any initial difficulties
- encouraging **all** mums to:
 - have lots of skin to skin contact with their babies at and after birth. This calms babies and stabilises their heart rate, breathing and temperature, and encourages good emotional development. It also helps breastfeeding get going well
 - recognise the signs that show their baby is hungry, encouraging them to feed whenever they see those signs, whether breastfeeding or bottle-feeding
 - keep their baby near them at all times, enabling them to recognise and respond to their baby's needs better
 - understand that young babies need to feed at night and know how to manage night feeds safely
 - know how to bottle-feed responsively and safely, using a paced technique, if they choose to do that, and using a first formula
 - avoid giving anything other than breastmilk or formula in the first 6 months or adding anything to bottles
 - wait for the signs showing babies are ready for solid foods, normally at around 6 months, and know how to introduce them appropriately