

August 2, 2016 [\[FOR MORE EVANS ARTICLES, CLICK HERE\]](#)



Evans Army Community Hospital lactation team promotes breastfeeding, seeks Baby Friendly Hospital designation

Commentary By Maj. Lynae Place, AN, RNC-Inpatient OB and Marie Williams, RN, CLC; Evans Army Community Hospital

August is National Breastfeeding Awareness month. The health benefits of breastfeeding are well recognized and apply to mothers and children in developed nations including the United States, as well as those in developing countries.

Breast milk is uniquely suited to the human infant's nutritional needs and is a live substance with unparalleled immunological and anti-inflammatory properties that protect against a host of illnesses and diseases for both mothers and children. For example, breast milk helps keep babies healthy by protecting against allergies, ear infections, obesity, diabetes and cancer. It is easily digested so babies have less constipation, diarrhea or upset stomachs. Breastfed babies also have healthier weights as they grow and may even score higher on IQ tests.

Likewise, the mother benefits from breastfeeding with a decreased risk of iron-deficiency anemia, decreased risk of postpartum hemorrhage, optimal metabolic profiles, reduced risk of various cancers, and psychological benefits. Mothers release hormones during breastfeeding such as prolactin that produces a peaceful, nurturing sensation that allows the mother to relax and focus on her child and oxytocin that promotes a strong sense of love and attachment between mother and child.

The Evans Army Community Hospital lactation team recognizes the importance of breastfeeding and is proud to announce that starting in

August, it will be providing lactation support to inpatient breastfeeding mothers seven days a week and outpatient services five days a week.

Last year, the lactation team was awarded the International Board Certified Lactation Consultant Care award for its efforts in lactation support. The team is also actively pursuing Baby Friendly Hospital designation as it accomplishes the ten key steps set forth by Baby Friendly USA and the goals of the global initiative of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund.

Evans hospital has completed the Baby Friendly Hospital's discovery, development, and dissemination phases and is currently in the final designation phase.

In the discovery phase, Evans hospital applied to become a Baby Friendly Hospital via the facility data sheet and received approval to begin. Staff members were engaged and asked to assess areas for improvement via a self-appraisal survey.

In the development phase, Evans hospital worked as a team to implement the following ten key steps:

- A written breastfeeding policy routinely communicated to all healthcare staff.
- All other healthcare staff trained in the skills necessary to implement this policy. The Mountain Post Birthing Center's staff members complete a 15 hour course and five hours of hands on training with lactation consultants to obtain the skills necessary to facilitate breastfeeding.
- All pregnant women informed about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
- Mothers receive assistance to initiate breastfeeding within one hour of delivery.
- Mothers taught how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation even if they are separated from their infants.
- Infants provided no food supplements other than breast milk, unless *medically* indicated.
- Continuous rooming-in of infants with their mothers practiced 24 hours a day.
- Breastfeeding on demand encouraged.

- Pacifiers or artificial nipples not used with breastfeeding infants.
- A breastfeeding support group established and patients provided information about the support group upon discharge.

In the dissemination phase, the Evans hospital lactation team collected data to assess the impacts of the development phase. The data collection demonstrated that the staff understood and supported this initiative and that the facility's program improved each patient's overall breastfeeding experience. Staff members were excited to receive additional training; several opted to attend additional training to become Certified Lactation Consultants. By maintaining staff that are well educated in lactation support and the Baby Friendly Health Initiative, Evans hospital has significantly improved the overall breastfeeding experience.

Evans hospital recently entered the designation phase and will be evaluated through an on-site assessment of accomplishments. Only after the approval by Baby Friendly USA will Evans receive its designation as a Baby Friendly Hospital. In the meantime, the hospital's lactation team stands ready to provide expert breastfeeding support to every mother and infant at the Mountain Post Birthing Center.



Certified Lactation Consultation Elaine Hartle talks about breastfeeding with new parents Spc. Kevin and Anna Evans. (Photo by Jeff Troth)



Evans Army Community Hospital Lactation Team from LtoR: Maj. Lynae Place, Marie Williams, Brenda Willey, Elaine Hartle, Virgo Lajoie. (Photo by Joel Sundquist)