

# Northern Health: Growing for Gold

## Staff tips for Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Place

Thank you for supporting breastfeeding in your business/facility by taking part in the **Northern Health: Growing for Gold** decal program! As an individual, business, or facility, you are a vital part of creating a community that supports breastfeeding, making it part of our culture. Advertise your business as breastfeeding friendly - healthier people, healthier relationships, and healthier communities will be the result.

Below are tips for creating breastfeeding friendly spaces and respectful ways to manage customer questions about breastfeeding, and requests from breastfeeding mothers and families.

### Tips for creating breastfeeding-friendly spaces:

- All women have a right to breastfeed. *Anytime. Anywhere.*
- Display the **NH: Growing for Gold** decal in your window to show that breastfeeding is welcome in your business/facility.
- Hang this pamphlet at your site and have a few copies of the **NH: Growing for Gold** pamphlet to distribute if patrons have questions. (Copies of both

available at: <http://northernhealth.ca/YourHealth/Pregnancy-Maternity-Babies/GrowingforGold.aspx>)

- Ask any woman with a baby where she would like to sit. Allow her to pick a spot where she will be comfortable breastfeeding, if she chooses.
- Provide a comfortable space to feed for breastfeeding babies/toddlers and their mothers.
- If there is room, provide a private space for mothers not wishing to breastfeed in an open setting. A small, clean space (separate from the bathroom) with a chair is all that is really required. It is not appropriate to suggest a woman breastfeed in the bathroom.
- If the family requests a private or more comfortable location to breastfeed, know where this space is in your establishment and accommodate their request. It is not appropriate for staff to suggest that a woman relocate to this space unless she requests this.
- It is not appropriate for staff to suggest that the mother cover up or go somewhere more discreet to breastfeed.

- Express positive and enthusiastic attitudes towards breastfeeding. Be friendly and supportive to the family.
- In October, participate in local activities for World Breastfeeding Week. Closer to the date, check on the Northern Health website for more information.

### Responding to a family's request for a more comfortable or private location

A breastfeeding mother may make requests for a more private and/or comfortable space to breastfeed. Here are some actions that you can take to assist:

#### *Can I please have more privacy?*

Try to accommodate this request by knowing where a more comfortable and private location is within your facility or business. Consider comfortable seating and/or quieter atmosphere. The bathroom is not appropriate.



### *Is there a more comfortable place for us to nurse?*

Try to accommodate this request by knowing where the more comfortable and private locations are within your facility or business. Consider comfortable seating and/or quieter atmosphere. The bathroom is not appropriate.

### **Managing customers who may express negative feelings towards public breastfeeding**

Although the majority of the population accepts breastfeeding as a natural and normal way for a mother to feed her baby, there are some who may object to breastfeeding in public. As a business/facility that supports breastfeeding, you may experience negative customer feedback. Below, you can find examples of negative comments and a variety of respectful and appropriate messages that you and your staff can use to continue to provide a welcoming environment for breastfeeding mothers and the rest of your patrons.

#### ***Does she have to feed her baby here?***

Explain that you are a family friendly establishment and your business/facility

supports breastfeeding. Offer to move the concerned customer to another seat. Let them know that breastfeeding is a normal and natural way to feed a child. If the complainant is still insistent, let them know you will not be asking the mother to stop breastfeeding or asking her to move and that breastfeeding is a human right and women cannot be discriminated against based on sex or family status.

#### ***She shouldn't be allowed to breastfeed in public.***

Explain that under the Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedom, women have a right to breastfeed anywhere, anytime. Let the complainant know that your business supports this right and works to provide a comfortable and welcoming environment for mothers to feed their children.

#### ***Can you ask her to cover up?***

Explain that your business/facility is family friendly and breastfeeding friendly and that you work to create welcoming and comfortable environments for babies and mothers to breastfeed. Breastfeeding is normal and natural, and you support mothers feeding their children with or without a nursing cover and you will not be asking the mother to cover up.



#### ***Can you ask her to move?***

Explain that your business/facility is breastfeeding friendly and that you work to create welcoming and comfortable environments for babies and mothers to breastfeed. Offer to move the concerned customer to another seat. Let them know that breastfeeding is a normal and natural way to feed a child. If the complainant is still insistent, let them know you will not be asking the mother to stop breastfeeding or to move and that breastfeeding is a human right and women cannot be discriminated against based on sex or family status.

Thank you for being a leader in the recognition of supporting breastfeeding babies and their mothers in our community.

For more information on breastfeeding and the **NH: Growing for Gold** program, visit [northernhealth.ca](http://northernhealth.ca).

Thanks again for supporting breastfeeding.