Breastfeeding and work: let’s make it work!

It’s World Breastfeeding Week (1 – 7 August) and this year we celebrate all breastfeeding mums and support those mothers who return to work while still breastfeeding.

The theme of this year’s World Breastfeeding Week is ‘Breastfeeding and work: let’s make it work!’

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) makes it work for breastfeeding mums and provides breastfeeding-friendly environments for patients, staff and visitors.

The health service promotes and supports a family-friendly workplace and is proudly Baby Friendly Health Initiative (BFHI) accredited through UNICEF/World Health Organisation.

BFHI is a UNICEF/WHO initiative aimed at enabling facilities to create an environment where breastfeeding is the norm and practices known to promote health and well-being of all babies and their mothers are put into place.

Gympie Hospital’s Nurse Unit Manager, Women’s and Families, Shaneen Osborne said that to be accredited as ‘Baby Friendly’, hospitals must comply with the global standard, ‘Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding’, established by WHO and UNICEF.

“In a baby friendly hospital like Gympie Hospital, breastfeeding mothers are given consistent, accurate information and support; and we ensure there is space, time and support for breastfeeding mothers who return to work,” Ms Osborne said.

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“The health service has a good working relationship with the local Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA) group and provides literature to women upon discharge from the hospital. With this ongoing assistance, a woman can continue to be well-supported in her breastfeeding for the following months and years,” Ms Osborne said.

Rachael Todd from the ABA, Gympie group, said the key elements of support women needed in the workplace were a private, comfortable space to breastfeed or express breast milk; time during the working day to breastfeed or express; and support from employers and colleagues.

“While many employers would like to provide breastfeeding support they are often unsure how to do so. It’s encouraging to see SCHHS providing a better environment for all mothers,” she said.

“Support can make such a difference to a family’s breastfeeding journey. It can be the difference between continuing and giving up.”
Rachael Todd is visiting the Gympie Hospital Maternity Ward during World Breastfeeding Week to donate breastfeeding booklets on behalf of the ABA, to be given out to support new mothers.

“We will be donating a complete set of ABA booklets to the Maternity Ward. The set includes 23 booklets in the Breastfeeding Information Series, the Parenting Information Series and the Special Situation Information Series,” Ms Todd said.

“The information they include is comprehensive and they are presented in an easy to read format so will be great reference tools for both the hospital staff and the new mums in the ward.

“We’re pleased to be able to assist by providing this resource to support all the new mums on their journey,” she said.

The Australian Breastfeeding Association, Gympie group holds regular fortnightly meetings where new mums and experienced mums can share information, support and encouragement. For more information call Rachael Todd on mobile 0400 477 364.

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