



*Toi Te Ora – Public Health Service is committed to improving and protecting the health of the communities in the Bay of Plenty and Lakes districts.*

## **Position Statement – Breastfeeding**

Breast milk is the best first food for babies for optimal growth, development, and health.

Toi Te Ora - Public Health Service recommends that mothers exclusively breastfeed for around six months and then continue to breastfeed whilst introducing solid foods until their babies are at least one year old.

Breastfeeding has many benefits for the health of infants<sup>1,2</sup>. For example breastfeeding helps protect infants from some childhood infections, chronic illness, and sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI), as well as reducing the risk of obesity later in life<sup>1</sup>.

Breastfeeding has many benefits for the health of mothers. For example breastfeeding may reduce the mother's risk of some cancers and bone disease<sup>1</sup>.

Toi Te Ora - Public Health Service supports the normalisation of breastfeeding including in public spaces and workplaces, which will have a positive effect for breastfeeding mothers and their babies<sup>3</sup>.

A woman has the right to breastfeed and is protected from discrimination for breastfeeding under the Human Rights Act 1993 and international law<sup>3</sup>.

### **Toi Te Ora – Public Health Service advocates and supports the following:**

- Increasing the number of breastfeeding friendly public spaces
- Increasing the number of breastfeeding friendly workplaces and early childhood education services to support breastfeeding mothers
- Increasing access to quality information on breastfeeding
- Implementing the national breastfeeding guidelines<sup>3</sup>

Toi Te Ora – Public Health Service recognises that some women are unable to breastfeed and recommends that they be supported and provided with information and advice.


### **References**

<sup>1</sup>World Health Organisation (2014):

[http://www.who.int/elena/titles/bbc/breastfeeding\\_childhood\\_obesity/en/](http://www.who.int/elena/titles/bbc/breastfeeding_childhood_obesity/en/)

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Health (2008). *Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Healthy Infants and Toddlers (Aged 0–2): A background paper* (4th Ed). Wellington: Ministry of Health.

<sup>3</sup> National Breastfeeding Advisory Committee of New Zealand. 2009. *National Strategic Plan of Action for Breastfeeding 2008–2012: National Breastfeeding Advisory Committee of New Zealand's advice to the Director-General of Health*. Wellington. Ministry of Health.

Issued: Review Date: November 2018	Version 2.0 October 2015
Approved by the Management Team on: 9 November 2015	 Phil Shoemack