



NEWS RELEASE

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Joint Commission Campaign Helps Support and Prepare Mothers to Successfully Breastfeed

New brochure covers preparation before baby arrives, at hospital and finding support when baby and mom go home

(OAKBROOK TERRACE, Ill. – August 1, 2011) Pregnant women and new mothers need information and support so they can plan and be proactive if they choose to breastfeed their babies, according to The Joint Commission’s newest Speak Up™ educational campaign. The Joint Commission is launching this campaign during World Breastfeeding Week (August 1-7) to highlight the health benefits of breastfeeding and the importance of support for mothers and babies who are breastfeeding. The campaign is supported by the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, American Academy of Pediatrics, Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses, Baby-Friendly USA, Inc., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March of Dimes and United States Breastfeeding Committee.

The Joint Commission’s new campaign, “What You Need to Know About Breastfeeding.” covers topics such as preparing during pregnancy for breastfeeding, talking with nurses and doctors in the hospital about the desire to breastfeed, maintaining skin-to-skin contact with a newborn in the hospital, and planning for breastfeeding after leaving the hospital. The campaign brochure provides helpful tips and encourages mothers to rely on a support team of family members, friends, lactation consultants, nurses, and doctors to reach their breastfeeding goals.

“Breastfeeding is a natural experience, but it is a skill that often needs to be learned,” says Ana Pujols-McKee, M.D., executive vice president and chief medical officer, The Joint Commission. “It is important that mothers know there are support systems to help them start and keep on breastfeeding. Mothers should ask questions about breastfeeding before their baby is born and while they are in the hospital. This will help mothers continue to breastfeed after they go home.”

The many health benefits of breastfeeding for newborns include providing a natural source of nutrients, fewer ear and respiratory infections and less risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Women who breastfeed have less postpartum depression, as well as lower rates of breast and ovarian cancers.

The Joint Commission's new breastfeeding education campaign is part of the award-winning Speak Up program which urges people to take an active role in their own health care.

The basic framework of the Speak Up campaign urges patients to:

Speak up if you have questions or concerns, and if you do not understand, ask again. It is your body and you have a right to know.

Pay attention to the care you are receiving. Make sure you're getting the right treatments and medications by the right health care professionals. Do not assume anything.

Educate yourself about your diagnosis, the medical tests you are undergoing, and your treatment plan.

Ask a trusted family member or friend to be your advocate.

Know what medications you take and why you take them. Medication errors are the most common health care errors.

Use a hospital, clinic, surgery center, or other type of health care organization that has undergone a rigorous on-site evaluation against established state-of-the-art quality and safety standards, such as that provided by The Joint Commission.

Participate in all decisions about your treatment. You are the center of the health care team.

Speak Up brochures also are available on the topics of dialysis patients who are hospitalized, diabetes patients who are hospitalized, visiting the doctor's office, understanding medical tests, recovering after leaving the hospital, preventing medication mistakes, preventing infections, health literacy, preparing to become a living organ donor, avoiding mistakes in your surgery and preventing errors in care. The campaign includes animated Speak Up videos in English and Spanish intended as public service announcements. They air on The Joint Commission's [YouTube channel](#), on The Joint Commission [website](#), and in other venues. The cast of characters in the videos encounter everyday situations where they have to read instructions, inspect labels, and "speak up" to ask their doctors and caregivers questions. The brochures and videos can be found at <http://www.jointcommission.org/speakup.aspx>. To sign up to receive future issues of Speak Up™, please go to

http://www.jointcommission.org/thickbox/NewsletterSignUp.aspx?KeepThis=true&TB_iframe=true&height=480&width=640 to join the Speak Up™ E-Alerts list.

Statements from supporters of the breastfeeding campaign

“The March of Dimes urges all new mothers to breastfeed if they are able; it benefits both mom and baby. This is why we are pleased to be a collaborator in The Joint Commission’s new Speak Up campaign on breastfeeding. March of Dimes and The Joint Commission want women to be informed so that they can make the best decisions for themselves and their babies.”

Janis Biermann, M.S., senior vice president, Education & Health Promotion, March of Dimes Foundation

“Breastfeeding is the biological norm for infant feeding, and medical professionals have a responsibility to ensure that mothers and infants can achieve their infant feeding goals. By empowering mothers to speak up for breastfeeding, The Joint Commission will encourage families to make informed decisions about infant feeding. Importantly, however, Speak Up does more than simply exhort mothers to breastfeed – it empowers families to request specific, evidence-based practices that have been shown to improve breastfeeding success. CDC surveys have demonstrated that there are tremendous opportunities for quality improvement in maternity center support for breastfeeding. This campaign will provide families with the tools to advocate for optimal support, enabling them to achieve their breastfeeding goals.”

Gerald Calnen, M.D., president, Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine

“Supporting mothers to be able to breastfeed is one of CDC’s key strategies to improve the health of mothers and their children. We know that hospital support is critical for starting breastfeeding and so The Joint Commission’s program to educate new mothers is very important. These materials tell patients about how hospitals can help them when they are first learning to feed their baby. The focus on early skin-to-skin care, rooming-in, avoiding formula and water supplements, and making sure there’s help after discharge are all very important.”

Laurence Grummer-Strawn, Ph.D., Nutrition Branch Chief, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

“The information in The Joint Commission's breastfeeding preparedness brochure is so important and exciting because it is targeted to women while they are still pregnant. At [Julie's Village](#), we know the best time to prepare for breastfeeding is before the baby is born. A

pregnant woman can be so much more confident about meeting her goals if she follows the brochure tips. Having The Joint Commission recognize the importance of preparedness and use its influence and resources to help prepare pregnant women sends a signal to hospitals to become more supportive in helping new mothers establish breastfeeding. Julie's Village is honored to support The Joint Commission on this important project.”

Julie Hamilton, CLC, founder, Julie's Village

“The Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) supports breastfeeding as the optimal method of infant nutrition. Women need consistent and accurate guidance in order to successfully breastfeed. Because of the critical role of nurses in breastfeeding support and education, AWHONN was pleased to participate in The Joint Commission’s breastfeeding Speak Up campaign.”

Karen Peddicord, Ph.D., RNC, Chief Executive Officer, Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses

“Hospitals must promote positive breastfeeding experiences so mothers will be enabled to optimally breastfeed their newborn. Hospitals must also be cognizant of the fact that their skill in this area is important for optimal infant and maternal health. The Joint Commission activities serve to augment programs from the AAP, CDC, and support the Surgeon General’s Call to Action!”

Richard J. Schanler, M.D., FAAP, chair, Section on Breastfeeding, American Academy of Pediatrics

“The opportunity to collaborate on the development of specific, supportive breastfeeding messages for mothers is perfectly aligned with the United States Breastfeeding Committee’s vision that breastfeeding is the natural and normal way to feed babies. The Speak Up material on breastfeeding provides mothers and their families with the tools they need to assure that their health care providers, before, during and after the hospital visit, support their family’s decision about how to feed their babies. Most mothers do decide to breastfeed, and this tool helps families understand how to get the help and support they need to be successful.”

Robin W. Stanton, M.A., R.D., L.D., chair, United States Breastfeeding Committee

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Founded in 1951, The Joint Commission seeks to continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value. The Joint Commission evaluates and accredits more than 19,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States, including more than 10,300 hospitals and home care organizations, and more than 6,500 other health care

organizations that provide long term care, behavioral health care, laboratory and ambulatory care services. The Joint Commission also provides certification of more than 2,000 disease-specific care programs, primary stroke centers, and health care staffing services. An independent, not-for-profit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation's oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care. Learn more about The Joint Commission at www.jointcommission.org.