



Department of Health

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Dear Colleague:

We are writing to inform you about a new policy statement from the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) regarding breastfeeding. This policy provides health care providers with information on situations where breastfeeding is contraindicated or not advisable due to the health of the mother or her infant and/or when temporary cessation of breastfeeding is recommended.

The benefits of breastfeeding for both infants and mothers are well documented. There are instances, however, where breastfeeding or providing a mother's own breastmilk is contraindicated or not advisable. This policy describes specific health conditions and situations where breastfeeding may need to be modified, delayed, discontinued or not initiated, including:

- medical contraindications for breastfeeding
- maternal conditions where breastfeeding is not advisable, but a mother's own expressed breastmilk can be provided
- conditions where temporary cessation of breastfeeding or mother's expressed breastmilk should not be used
- special situations where recommendations for breastfeeding need to be individually tailored
- infant conditions where breastfeeding can be initiated with feeding modifications.

It is important that health care providers initiate discussions about infant feeding options during the prenatal period. Appropriately-tailored information and alternative infant feeding options should be discussed and planned for women when breastfeeding is contraindicated or there are situations when temporary cessation is advisable. Providers and staff should also be aware that women who are not breastfeeding for medical contraindications may face social, familial or personal pressure to consider or continue to breastfeed and may require additional support and resources, which are detailed in the policy, to address any perceived internal or external stigma. Information on lactation support during temporary cessation of breastfeeding, services available at the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and discharge instructions for women and their infants are included in the document.

Please share this policy statement with providers and staff in your organization caring for pregnant and postpartum women or their infants. To facilitate this process, the NYSDOH has developed a presentation for educational/training purposes.

The policy statement, **Situations Where Breastfeeding is Contraindicated or Not Advisable**, and the presentation are located at these URL/Links:

- Center for Community Health:
<https://www.health.ny.gov/community/pregnancy/breastfeeding/providers/>

- AIDS Institute/Perinatal HIV Prevention & Newborn Screening:
https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/providers/testing/perinatal/breastfeeding_policy.htm

For questions regarding this policy statement, please send an email with “Contraindications” in the subject line as follows:

- *General medical* contraindications to breastfeeding
 - Center for Community Health: promotebreastfeeding@health.ny.gov
- Contraindications to breastfeeding in the *context of HIV*
 - AIDS Institute: phpp@health.ny.gov

We trust this policy statement will be helpful to you. We thank you for your continued commitment to promoting the health and well-being of women and their infants in New York State.

Sincerely,

Nora K. Yates
Director
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Johanne E. Morne, MS
Director
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