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# FROM DAY ONE

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## ACTIONS TO IMPROVE BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT AT HOME

### THE NEED FOR SUPPORT AT HOME

Women whose partners, mothers, and friends are supportive of breastfeeding are more likely to choose to breastfeed and to be successful in carrying out their breastfeeding goals. On the other hand, negative attitudes of family and friends can pose a barrier.

### YOU CAN HELP

Thank you for considering how you can protect, promote, or support breastfeeding in Texas. We've created this list of actions for you to consider as you identify your personal objectives and goals for making a difference.

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### Give Mothers the Support They Need

In the United States women often lack accurate, consistent information on breastfeeding, and women who choose to breastfeed their children are frequently not given the support they need. To see breastfeeding as a goal they can achieve for themselves and their babies and to understand the risks associated with not breastfeeding, mothers must be supported to seek the information, support, and care they deserve.

The actions suggested below are ideal for family members, friends, and clinicians.

Actions Recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General:

- Help pregnant women learn about the importance of breastfeeding for their babies and themselves.
- Teach mothers how to breastfeed.
- Encourage mothers to talk to their maternity care providers about plans to breastfeed.
- Encourage mothers to ask for help with breastfeeding when needed.

Additional Actions to Consider:

- Help women feel comfortable about breastfeeding their babies by conveying a warm, positive attitude and acknowledging/thanking them for breastfeeding.
- Become aware of breastfeeding resources in your community and refer families to them if needed.

### Strengthen Support Programs

Mothers are most comfortable seeking support close to home, in the communities they are familiar with. Mothers can be supported by learning about breastfeeding in prenatal classes and by discussing their interest in breastfeeding with their friends, neighbors, and acquaintances. A woman can seek support from other mothers in her community, whether informally from her existing circle of support, by seeking out support from

mother-to-mother support groups, or from trained, knowledgeable women such as peer counselors who have previous experience with breastfeeding. Community-based groups can involve fathers, grandmothers, and other family members in education and support. Community-based programs can continue supporting women after discharge from the hospital to support continued breastfeeding.

The actions suggested below are ideal for public health entities; community organizations; and federal, state, and local WIC programs.

Actions Recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General:

- Create and maintain a sustainable infrastructure for mother-to-mother support groups and for peer counseling programs in hospitals and community health-care settings.
- Establish peer counseling as a core service available to all women in Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).
- Ensure around-the-clock access to resources that provide assistance with breastfeeding.

Additional Actions to Consider:

- Develop a community breastfeeding resources directory and distribute to new families.
- Work with your local WIC agency to promote the WIC Peer Counselor Program.
- Support the development of mother-to-mother support groups such as La Leche League International.
- Ensure referrals to appropriate levels of support and care by telling health-care professionals in the community about available resources.
- Publicize and use the Texas Lactation Support Directory and the Texas Lactation Support Hotlines: (800) 514-6667, (855) 550-6667, and (877) 550-5008.
- Complete the DSHS Peer Counselor Train-the-Trainers course and work to develop a network of community peer counselors.

Do you have an action or specific tactic you'd like to recommend that is not listed here? Tell us about your recommended action at [WICGeneral@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:WICGeneral@dshs.state.tx.us).

For more ideas about how you can help support breastfeeding, visit *From Day One: A Community for Breastfeeding Support* at [SupportFromDayOne.org](http://SupportFromDayOne.org).