



NAVAL HOSPITAL Jacksonville

Healing our Nation's Heroes

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Naval Hospital Jacksonville First Hospital on Florida's First Coast to Receive Prestigious World Health Organization, UNICEF "Baby Friendly" Designation

Joins Exclusive List of Health Care Organizations Recognized Worldwide for Promoting Breastfeeding, Infant Health

By Tami Begasse, Naval Hospital Jacksonville Public Affairs

JACKSONVILLE, Fla.—Naval Hospital (NH) Jacksonville today announced that it is the first hospital on the First Coast to receive the coveted international "Baby Friendly" certification granted by Baby Friendly USA, part of a global initiative sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

"The administration and staff of Naval Hospital Jacksonville are to be commended for their outstanding work in adopting policies and practices to support better breastfeeding. Baby-Friendly USA extends our heartiest congratulations as we confer to them the prestigious WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly designation," said Baby-Friendly USA Executive Director Trish MacEnroe. "Hospitals play a vital role in helping mothers and babies successfully establish breastfeeding. Breast milk lays the best possible foundation for a lifetime of good health. It contains substances that cannot be reproduced artificially. As a result, infants who are not breastfed are more likely to incur a multitude of health problems that take a human toll and cost our health care system billions of dollars annually."

The global Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative selects hospitals and birthing centers that successfully implement the recommended ten steps of a comprehensive breastfeeding program, which includes limits on baby formula, initiating breastfeeding in the first hour of life, keeping mothers and babies in the same room, and support groups for women who breastfeed.

"We want to do all we can to improve the health of our youngest heroes and encourage the use of mother's milk for the more than 1,000 babies born in our hospital each year," said Naval Hospital Jacksonville Commanding Officer Capt. Lynn Welling. "This prestigious international

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recognition, illustrates our commitment to supporting a mother's decision to breast feed and ultimately helping reduce the risks of common childhood infections, asthma and diabetes."

While more than 20,000 facilities have received the Baby Friendly designation worldwide, only 119 facilities (including NH Jacksonville) have been certified in the United States. Along with being the first hospital in Northeast Florida, NH Jacksonville is the fourth hospital in Florida and third military facility with the designation.

"I congratulate Naval Hospital Jacksonville on its efforts to support new mothers and provide babies with the best possible start in life," said Heather Huffman, chair of the Northeast Florida Breastfeeding Collaborative. "As the First Coast's first hospital to receive this prestigious international recognition, Naval Hospital Jacksonville has again demonstrated its commitment to providing our nation's heroes and their family members with the best possible care – from birth to retirement. Whether a health care professional, member of the community, employer or family members, I would encourage and challenge us as a community to strive to improve breastfeeding rates and increase our support for breastfeeding."

On average, 80 percent of mothers who delivered at NH Jacksonville were exclusively breastfeeding their babies when they left the hospital.

The "Baby-Friendly" designation is given after a rigorous on-site survey is completed. The award is maintained by continuing to practice these ten steps as demonstrated by quality processes.

- Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff
- Train all health care staff in skills necessary to implement the breastfeeding policy.
- Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
- Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth.
- Show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation, even if they are separated from their infants.
- Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated.
- Practice rooming-in, which allows mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
- Encourage breastfeeding on demand.
- Give no pacifiers or artificial nipples to breastfeeding infants.
- Establish/foster breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge.

U.S. Surgeon General Regina M. Benjamin included taking the steps recommended by the UNICEF/WHO's Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative as one of her "call to actions" to health care professionals, communities, families and employers in her national prevention strategy rolled out earlier this year at the Health & Human Services Consumer Health IT Summit.

Breastfeeding exclusively for the first six months of an infant's life has many health benefits for babies and mothers, including a reduction in infectious diseases and mortality during infancy, improved bonding and increased postpartum weight loss. Breastfeeding also helps reduce the risks of common childhood infections, asthma, diabetes and other conditions that children who

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get mother's milk are less likely to develop. It saves time and money for families in both baby formula and medical costs. Low rates of breastfeeding cost an estimated \$2.2 billion dollars in medical costs.

BFHI in the U.S.

Baby-Friendly USA, Inc is the U.S. authority for the implementation of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative ("BFHI"), a global program sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The initiative encourages and recognizes hospitals and birthing centers that offer an optimal level of care for breastfeeding mothers and their babies. Based on the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, this prestigious international award recognizes birth facilities that offer breastfeeding mothers the information, confidence, and skills needed to successfully initiate and continue breastfeeding their babies. Further information about the U.S. Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative may be obtained by contacting Baby-Friendly USA, Inc, 327 Quaker Meeting House Road, East Sandwich, MA 02537. Phone: 508-888-8092. Fax: 508-888-8050. Email info@babyfriendlyusa.org. Web: www.babyfriendlyusa.org.

About Naval Hospital Jacksonville

Naval Hospital Jacksonville's priority since its founding in 1941 is to heal the nation's heroes and their families. The command is comprised of the hospital, located aboard Naval Air Station Jacksonville, and five branch health clinics in Florida (Jacksonville, Key West and Mayport) and Georgia (Albany and Kings Bay). Of its patient population—215,000 active and retired sailors, soldiers, Marines, airmen, guardsmen and their families—more than 57,000 are enrolled with a primary care manager at one of its facilities. Each and every day, a dedicated team of 2,500 military and civilian personnel sees 1,500 outpatients, admits 12 inpatients, cares for 125 people in the ER, performs 19 same-day surgeries, fills 3,600 prescriptions, conducts 3,000 lab tests and delivers two-three babies. Additionally, up to 15 percent of its active duty staff is deployed around the globe providing combat, humanitarian and disaster care.

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(Photo by HM1 Scott Morgan)