

## New online directory to support breastfeeding in Ontario

[www.ontariobreastfeeds.ca](http://www.ontariobreastfeeds.ca) offers listing of breastfeeding supports across Ontario

May 23, TORONTO -- The Best Start Resource Centre, a key program of Health Nexus, has launched *Bilingual Online Ontario Breastfeeding Services* (Répertoire en ligne bilingue des services d'allaitement de l'Ontario), a bilingual online directory that links breastfeeding mothers and service providers who work with breastfeeding women to a listing of breastfeeding supports across Ontario.

"Breastfeeding is important for babies. Breastfeeding is a learning process for both mothers and babies. All mothers benefit from the support of peers, sometimes they can use help from professionals and experts," says Wendy McAllister, Manager of the Best Start Resource Centre. "We're pleased to offer this online, searchable directory to access quick and reliable information on breastfeeding supports."

Breastfeeding is beneficial for both child and mother. Benefits include reducing the risk of child obesity, promoting healthy brain development and nurturing the child-mother bond. According to the 2013 Canadian Consumer Healthy Survey, only 25% of women breastfeed exclusively for 6 months. The current recommendation supported by the Health Canada, and the Canadian Paediatric Society, among others, is 6 months of exclusive breastfeeding followed by breastfeeding for 2 years or longer, with the introduction of other healthy foods.

"Making sure the content is delivered to computers, tablets and smartphones in the best format is a key feature of the directory. It is designed to ensure that information is available when people need it and delivered in a way that it will fit whichever device is in their hands at the time. If we can support and promote access to breastfeeding resources across the province, it will likely result in an increase in mothers who are breastfeeding, and breastfeeding exclusively for longer. It is the most natural, comprehensive and inexpensive way to ensure a healthy start for babies. This is our goal," says Barb Willet, Executive Director of Health Nexus.

The directory links breastfeeding mothers to services such as peer support, lactation consultants, and a range of other services and health care providers. Services can be searched by location and type of service.

A link to [Telehealth Ontario](http://Telehealth Ontario) can connect mothers to speak with a registered nurse with breastfeeding expertise 24 hours per day.

### **About Health Nexus**

Health Nexus is a leader in health promotion, a bilingual organization that supports individuals, organizations and communities to strengthen their capacity to promote health. Their broad approach to health includes health equity, chronic disease prevention and early child development. Over the last 25 years, they have been supporting health services workers and health promotion organizations to develop and implement strategies to improve the health of their communities. Their services include consultations, training events and a large collection of resources.

**About the Best Start Resource Centre**

The [Best Start Resource Centre](#) is Ontario's Maternal Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre. The Best Start Resource Centre supports service providers across Ontario working to implement preconception, prenatal and child health promotion programs and initiatives. In addition to their large collection of resources on 18 topics, some of them available in multiple languages, Best Start provides training, consultation, networking and referrals. The Resource Centre also develops and leads social awareness campaigns to enhance the health of expectant and new parents, newborns and young children.

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