

10 February 2016

Southland mum says new free app is 'help when you need it'

Breastfeeding is going well for a first time mum, thanks to a free app designed to provide women, who wish to breastfeed, with advice when they need it.

BreastFedNZ is a free app available on Apple and Android devices which provides simple, consumer focused information alongside illustrations, photos, video clips, web links and personal stories.

The app was developed by the Midland Maternity Action Group (MMAG), a clinical network of the Midland District Health Boards in response to feedback from a 2013 study* which identified a need to harness smart phones to provide new mothers with instant user-friendly advice.

Lisa's son, Lachlan, was born on 15 November at Gore Hospital.

"Early on in the pregnancy I decided I wanted to breastfeed and learned about the new app from a colleague of my mother's. I downloaded it when I was 30 weeks pregnant and quickly went through the videos and photos, going back to read the various chapters in more detail in the months leading up to Lachlan's birth.

"The design is very easy to use and it's also great, of course, that it's designed for Kiwi mums. I love the real videos and the great tips, especially when things aren't going as well as they could be. It's easy to read in one go and to go back to numerous times, especially as something to read while feeding!

"Reading 'the first days' chapter in late pregnancy meant I knew what to expect in a way after the birth and it was incredibly helpful to go back in and get information and tips on issues as they presented themselves."

Lisa is crediting the app as one of the things which helped her establish and continue breastfeeding.

"When you need advice or reassurance it's there – it puts your mind at rest and, best of all, the advice works."

BreastFedNZ contains six chapters covering pregnancy and birth, the first few days, early weeks, breastfeeding the older baby, twins and early babies. Answers are also provided to common questions. To date there have been more than 2,700 downloads of the app.

Ends

Notes

Karen Palmer

The author of BreastFedNZ, Karen Palmer, is an experienced midwife, lactation consultant and Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative co-ordinator.

Background information

The initial objective of the app was to find a more consumer friendly way to support the work of Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) and the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding (The Ten Steps).

During 2013, the NZ Institute of Rural Health was commissioned to carry out the 'Midland Region Rural Maternity Services Consumer Engagement Study'*. The study recommended the need for a mobile phone app for pregnancy and birth which should be provided free to newly pregnant women.

Combined, these two needs and recommendations provided the catalyst for the Midland Maternity Action Group to forge ahead with the development of the breastfeeding app.

Website www.breastfednz.co.nz

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