

Media release  
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## Breastfeeding smartphone app proving popular beyond Midland

The popularity of a free smartphone app designed to provide new mothers, especially those in remote areas, with practical advice and support on breastfeeding has exceeded expectations since its launch in August 2015 with more than 12,000 downloads across New Zealand.

BreastFedNZ is a free app available on iTunes and Google Play Stores. It 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, a clinical network of the five Midland District Health Boards, in response to feedback from a 2013 study\* which identified a need to harness smartphone technology to provide new mothers with instant user-friendly advice and support about breastfeeding.

Content developer, Karen Palmer, said the number of downloads and the uptake across New Zealand had exceeded initial predictions.

“We knew the demand was out there but are delighted to see the volume of downloads from mothers, their families, and health professionals and to receive endorsement that the content and style is hitting the mark. It is also encouraging that the app is being picked up mothers and health care providers beyond the Midland region.”

New mother Bree Claudatos from Hawke’s Bay said she was introduced to the BreastFedNZ app when her daughter was only a few weeks old.

“It has been the best tool to have to get information and ideas instantly. It has given me confidence to keep breastfeeding and provided me with new ideas when feeding got tough during that first month or so,” she said.

“I was able to learn some useful tips and tricks to get around problems I was facing and find out invaluable information that was relevant to the different stages and issues we were experiencing.

Whilst my daughter is now three months old, I still refer to it, and being an app on my phone means I’m able to easily access information at any time and continue to educate myself. I’ve spoken about this app often to other new Mums in my coffee group and would recommend BreastFedNZ as a must to download to all new Mums.”



Bree and daughter, Quinn, from Napier

The app has also been well received by health professionals.

Fiona Hermann, Associate Clinical Midwifery Director, Waikato District Health Board said the BreastFedNZ app provides a quick, easy, convenient place for women and whānau to access accurate breastfeeding information and help.

“It’s right where you are breastfeeding – in the car or on the couch at home; it’s really handy if you are a bit remote or don’t have services near you as it’s like having a kind expert in your phone. Just the right amount of information without overloading women, but with links to find more help or info as and when you need it.”

BreastFedNZ contains six chapters covering pregnancy and birth, the first few days, early weeks, breastfeeding the older baby, twins and early babies, and ‘this and that’. Answers are also provided to common questions and concerns. The app also includes ideas for those in the supportive role for mothers, such as dads, partners, friends, and extended family members.

Karen Palmer paid tribute to the collaboration with mothers, midwives, lactation consultants, public health and obstetricians in the app’s development.

“Throughout its development in 2015 we worked with and sought feedback from these groups and feel confident that women will find BreastFedNZ a useful tool to help establish and maintain breastfeeding, ultimately lifting breastfeeding rates in New Zealand.”

Ends

Notes

### **Karen Palmer**

The content developer of BreastFedNZ, Karen Palmer, is an experienced nurse, midwife, and lactation consultant, who works for Western Bay of Plenty Plunket as the Community Lactation Services Coordinator.

### **Background information**

The initial objective of the app was to find a more consumer friendly way to support the work of the 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](http://www.breastfednz.co.nz)

### **App download buttons**



App Store Button – [Download Here](#)

App Store HTML hyperlink code –

<https://itunes.apple.com/nz/app/breastfed-nz/id1029205120>



Google play Button – [Download Here](#)

App Store HTML hyperlink –

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### **QR code**



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