

Media release

Health professions and mothers welcome new breastfeeding app

Mothers and health professionals have welcomed a new smart phone app because it provides “one source of information all on one app, reducing the need for lots of resources.”

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.

The app, now freely available to women, was previewed by mothers and health professionals involved in its development at a function at the Early Years Services Hub at Te Manu Toroa in Tauranga on Friday 28 August.

Author, Karen Palmer, said that after months of collaboration and development, it was great to see the app in the hands of women and their support networks.

“The app is written in a conversational tone conveying easy-to-understand information in a way which will relate to mothers, especially at those pressure times when you simply want to know why something’s happening, and what to do about it.”

Comments from some of the mums who attended Friday’s function -

- “It’s beautifully written and in a way that has a hint of humour coming through.”
- “It’s a confidence builder.”

The following are a sample of quotes from health professionals who attended Friday’s function –

- “I can take it around on our visits and use it on the spot. It will be good for me as a Kaimahi to use with our mamas.” Erena Koopu, Te Ha Ora Maori antenatal classes, Pirirakau Hauora.
- “There is so much information out there so it’s good to have one source of information for health professionals and mums. It’s all on one app so you don’t need lots of resources.” Te Rina Joseph, Hei Tiki Pumau antenatal and parenting programme, Huria Trust.
- “We are excited for mothers to be able to now access breastfeeding information and support so easily using this app.” Mel Arnold, Health Improvement Advisor, Toi Te Ora - Public Health Service.

BreastFedNZ contains three chapters covering pregnancy and birth, the first few days, early weeks with a further three chapters - breastfeeding the older baby, twins and early babies – due for launch in October. Answers are also provided to common questions.

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

“Throughout its development 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 around the region.”

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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