

Breastfeeding could save the NHS millions

Research commissioned by UNICEF UK reveals that low breastfeeding rates in the UK are costing the NHS millions of pounds.

A report entitled 'Preventing disease and saving resources: potential contribution of increasing breastfeeding rates in the UK' shows that moderate increases in breastfeeding could see potential savings to the NHS of approximately £40m per year.

The UK has one of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the world, particularly in terms of duration of breastfeeding. Improvements in care have led to more women starting to breastfeed, but many mothers encounter problems that can cause them to stop before they had planned to. UNICEF UK is calling for more



Image: UNICEF UK/Jill Jennings.

support to encourage mothers to breastfeed for longer.

Protecting newborn babies against whooping cough

The Department of Health has announced that pregnant women will be offered whooping cough vaccinations to protect their newborn babies following a rise in cases and deaths among young infants.

Whooping cough, also known as pertussis, affects all ages but young infants are at highest risk of severe complications and death because they are not usually fully vaccinated until they are around four months old.

The move comes as the latest figures for England and Wales, released by the Health Protection Agency (HPA), show a large increase in cases in young infants. Chief

Medical Officer Dame Sally Davies said: "Whooping cough is highly contagious and newborns are particularly vulnerable. Nine infants have died as a result of whooping cough this year and there have been 302 cases of the disease in children under three months old."

The vaccine will be offered to pregnant women between 28 and 38 weeks' gestation during routine antenatal appointments with a nurse, midwife or GP.

The temporary programme will be monitored by the HPA and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

New guidelines for early-onset neonatal infection

The healthcare guidance body NICE has published new guidelines on the use of antibiotics for the prevention and treatment of early-onset (within 72 hours of birth) neonatal infection. The guidance should aid faster diagnosis and treatment for newborn babies who have an infection and avoid needless use of antibiotics in those who do not.

Early-onset neonatal bacterial infection is a major cause of mortality and morbidity in newborn babies. It is the cause of death for one in four babies who develop it, even when given antibiotics. Organisms from the

mother's genital tract usually cause these infections, including group B Streptococcus (GBS), *E.coli*, Pseudomonas and Klebsiella. Such infections may develop suddenly and rapidly, with mortality particularly high in premature babies and those with a low birth weight.

The guidance recommends that the NHS needs to prioritise the treatment of sick babies and use antibiotics appropriately to avoid the development of bacterial resistance to antibiotics.

The guideline is available at guidance.nice.org.uk/cg149

NurseAid is now known as Cavell Nurses' Trust

Cavell Nurses' Trust, formerly known as NurseAid, has rebranded as the charity looks to continue its essential work supporting nurses, midwives and healthcare assistants. The charity was established in 1917 following the death of heroic British nurse Edith Cavell during the First World War.

Over the last five years, Cavell Nurses' Trust has provided financial support worth more than £2.5 million to thousands of working and retired nurses and midwives, students and healthcare assistants in need.

The Trust also runs an annual scholarship awards scheme, designed to help nursing and midwifery students at the start of their careers.

More information is available at www.cavellnursestrust.org



Diabetes during pregnancy – how is the baby affected?

Dr Karen Logan (*pictured*) of Imperial College London has been awarded funding by the charity Action Medical Research to investigate how a mother's diabetes during pregnancy affects her baby.

Babies born to mothers who suffer from diabetes during pregnancy are at least four times more likely than other babies to develop type 2 diabetes later in life. However, there is no way to predict which of these babies will actually develop diabetes.

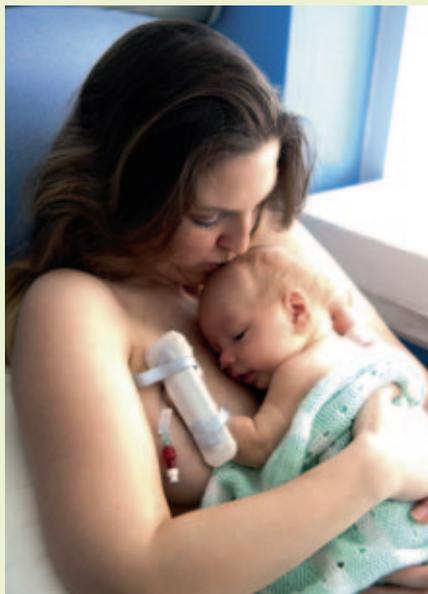
Dr Logan's study will look at the 'metabolic fingerprints' of babies born to mothers who developed diabetes during pregnancy – by assessing the pattern of naturally occurring substances in the urine and measuring the distribution of body fat.

Small Wonders Change programme – an update

The Small Wonders Change programme aims to support neonatal and midwifery staff to enable the families of sick and premature babies to be more actively involved in their baby's care in ways that are known to improve the health outcomes of the child and wellbeing of the family. At the heart of the Change Programme is the Small Wonders DVD consisting of 12 films following 14 families through their experience of having a baby on the neonatal unit.

To drive forward the embedding of the Small Wonders DVD across the UK, Best Beginnings has recruited Small Wonders Champions; these are mostly neonatal nurses or midwives who have volunteered their time to champion the roll out of the DVD within their units.

To monitor progress and to enhance support, Best Beginnings sent a survey to the 414 Champions in each of the 136 neonatal units that have the DVD. Results from the 33 neonatal units that



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responded were incredibly positive. The Champions estimated that 60% of relevant staff had watched all, or the

majority, of films and 70% of Champions had started distributing the DVD to parents (hospitals are encouraged not to give the DVD to parents until all relevant staff are familiar with the content).

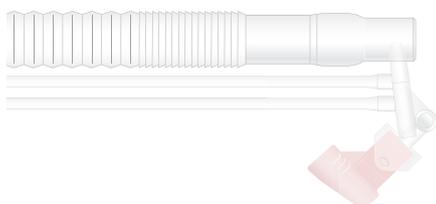
In addition to this, when asked how useful units found the Best Beginnings Champion resources, 60% of respondents said 'very useful' and 24% said they found them 'extremely useful'.

Best Beginnings would like to say a huge thank you to the Small Wonders Champions for their incredibly hard work. They will be holding a celebratory get-together for Small Wonders Champions and other neonatal staff at the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative Annual Conference in December.

View the survey at

www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/small-wonders-progress-and-activity. For more information, feedback and suggestions contact andrea@bestbeginnings.org.uk

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