



La Leche League Canada

Because breastfeeding isn't always easy, we're here to help

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La Leche League Canada comments on Health Canada's Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants Recommendations

La Leche League Canada was pleased to participate in Health Canada's on-line consultation process to gather input on the draft statement "Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants: Recommendations from Birth to Six Months" says La Leche League Canada Board of Directors spokesperson Miyoko Rasmussen.

"We thank the Minister of Health Leona Aglukkaq for extending the deadline for the online consultation and for expanding the consultation process for this very important document," she says.

Rasmussen and La Leche League Canada's Professional Liaison Administrator Nicola Aquino prepared LLLC's submission, sent to Health Canada's Office of Nutrition Policy and Promotion on April 14, 2011.



A key point of the submission is La Leche League Canada's suggestion that the language of Health Canada's recommendations should reflect breastfeeding as the normal way to feed infants.

"Referring to the 'benefits of breastfeeding' creates the impression that formula feeding is the norm and breastfeeding is above the norm. There are risks in not breastfeeding, therefore we suggested that Health Canada change this phrase to the 'importance of breastfeeding'," explains Aquino.

La Leche League Canada also recommended that Health Canada:

- describe the risks to infant health of not breastfeeding, including the increased risk of childhood illnesses such as ear, stomach and respiratory infections and long-term risks in adults, who were not breastfed as infants, such as higher rates of diabetes and obesity
- describe the risks to mothers' health when they choose not to breastfeed, including higher rates of some cancers
- encourage health care professionals to assist mothers to breastfeed rather than 'teach' them to breastfeed so that women are empowered to take responsibility for their own health and to take charge of the normal physiological process of breastfeeding their own children
- prohibit rather than 'discourage' the advertising and free distribution of artificial infant milk products

- recognize that peer support for breastfeeding works best when provided by other breastfeeding mothers in a social network
- remove discussion of formula feeding practices from this document and provide information about formula feeding through other documents
- revise recommendations regarding Vitamin D and other vitamin supplementation for breastfed infants to reflect current research.

La Leche League Canada’s mother-to-mother breastfeeding support is available to all Canadian families and is provided by trained volunteers who have all breastfed at least one child for at least one year. Volunteers participate in an apprenticeship-like program that includes extensive reading and learning, to ensure the information that they provide is evidence-based, along with training in communication skills, before they are accredited by this national organization.

“On the surface, the monthly meetings facilitated by LLLC volunteers and the telephone helping that they provide is similar to that provided by other peer-support groups, but in practice these Leaders have an extensive support network and are able to provide information that is accurate and up-to-date,” says Aquino.

She adds: “Some mothers continue to attend meetings even after their children have weaned because of the support they find in sharing experiences and information. Our focus is breastfeeding, but we also have many resources on parenting and good nutrition.”

The full text of La Leche League Canada’s submission to Health Canada can be read on the organization’s website: www.LLLC.ca

For more information, please contact:

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