

Course guide

Alberta Breastfeeding Course: Evidence-Based Essentials For Healthcare Professionals



Contact information

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Acknowledgements

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- Provincial Breastfeeding Committee
- Provincial Breastfeeding Staff Education Working Group
- University of Calgary Continuing Medical Education Breastfeeding Scientific Planning Committee
- Healthy Children and Families Steering Committee

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Course information

Welcome to Alberta's go-to breastfeeding course for healthcare professionals! This course will provide you with 24 hours of free, Continuing Medical Education (CME)-accredited, self-paced online learning. It was developed to build your knowledge and skills to help families achieve their breastfeeding goals.



Registration

Register through the University of Calgary Cumming School of Medicine Continuing Medical Education and Professional Development (CME&PD) website ecme.ucalgary.ca.

Login Information

Username/Email:

Password:

Course syllabus

You can keep track of when you complete each module by using the date completed spaces below.

Module 1 – Positive Breastfeeding Support

Date completed:

This module will enhance your interpersonal skills as you help families navigate their breastfeeding journey and meet their feeding goals. You will explore parent perspectives on breastfeeding support and how to apply different patient and family-centred care approaches in your practice.

Topics:

- Breastfeeding self-efficacy
- The breastfeeding socio-ecological context
- Breastfeeding parent perspectives
- Reflective and evidence-informed practice
- Cultural safety and trauma informed care approaches
- The LEARN model

Duration: 1.5 hours

Module 2 – Informed Feeding Decisions

Date completed:

Curious about how you can best support families with their infant and child feeding decisions? This module will provide you with the knowledge and skills to facilitate informed feeding decisions across the continuum of care.

Topics:

- Informed feeding decisions definition and criteria for use
- Principles of informed feeding decisions

Duration: 1.5 hours

Module 3 – Including Partners & Supporters

Date completed:

This module will provide you with the interpersonal knowledge and skills you need to encourage partner and close supporter involvement in the breastfeeding team. You will explore family perspectives on breastfeeding support and gain strategies to help your practice and workplace become more partner- and supporter-friendly.

Topics:

- Partner and supporter influences and perspectives on breastfeeding
- The breastfeeding team
- Strategies to facilitate partner and supporter involvement in breastfeeding

Duration: 1 hour

Module 4 – Introduction to Breastmilk & Breastfeeding

Date completed:

Are you new to breastfeeding support or need a refresher on breastfeeding anatomy, physiology, nutrition, health benefits and safety? This module will provide you with foundational knowledge on these topics from evidence-based, patient and family-centred care, as well as informed feeding decisions perspectives.

Topics:

- Anatomy and physiology
- Components and stages of breastmilk
- Breastfeeding parent nutrition
- Health benefits of breastfeeding
- Breastfeeding safety issues
- Contraindications to breastfeeding in Canada

Duration: 2.5 hours

Module 5 – Breastfeeding Support Skills & Assessment

Date completed:

This module will help you to learn more about supporting the breastfeeding dyad relationship between parents and infants, cue-based feeding and effective latching. You will also be introduced to the components of a breastfeeding assessment and will have the opportunity to practice your assessment skills through scenario-based learning.

Topics:

- The breastfeeding relationship
- Cue-based feeding

- Skin-to-skin care
- Hand expression
- Breastfeeding positions
- Effective and comfortable latching
- Effective milk transfer
- Room sharing
- Sleep considerations

Duration: 2.5 hours

Module 6 – Variations & Challenges for the Breastfeeding Parent

Date completed:

The decision to breastfeed can be a positive experience, but parents can also encounter challenges as they work towards their feeding goals. In this module, you will learn about the variations and challenges that some parents experience as they breastfeed and how to provide tailored support that is both patient-centred and evidence-based.

Topics:

- Nipple pain
- Nipple vasospasm
- Variations in nipple size and protrusion
- Nipple shields
- Hypoplasia and insufficient glandular tissue
- Breast surgery and trauma
- Malignancies
- Impaired lactogenesis and perceived insufficient milk supply
- Birth complications and interventions
- Physical conditions
- Mental health
- Postpartum engorgement
- Ductal narrowing
- Acute mastitis and breast abscess
- Subacute mastitis
- Candidiasis

Duration: 4 hours

Module 7 – Variations & Challenges for the Breastfeeding Infant

Date completed:

Healthy term infants are born with natural feeding instincts that help them breastfeed, but some infants and their parents may encounter challenges that hinder effective feeding. In this module, you will learn about the variations and challenges that some otherwise healthy infants experience and how to provide tailored support to the breastfeeding family that is both patient and family-centred and evidence-informed.

Topics:

- Growth monitoring
- Behaviour variations
- Hypoglycemia
- Hyperbilirubinemia
- Dehydration
- Gastrointestinal disturbances
- Oropharyngeal candidiasis
- Musculoskeletal challenges

Duration: 4 hours

Module 8 – Breastmilk Expression & Supplementary Feeding

Date completed:

The path to achieving feeding goals is unique for each breastfeeding parent. In this module, you will learn how to best support breastfeeding families with breastmilk expression and supplementary feeding. You will become familiar with current best practices on these topics to help families on their breastfeeding journey.

Topics:

- Breastmilk expression
- Antenatal colostrum expression
- Exclusive pumping
- Breastfeeding terms and definitions for classification
- Indications for supplementary feeding
- Supplementary feeding options
- Supplementary feeding amounts & feeding plans
- Safe preparation and storage of supplementary feeds
- Spoon, cup, finger, bottle feeding and lactation aids
- The LEARN model

Duration: 2.5 hours

Module 9 – Community & System Supports for Breastfeeding

Date completed:

This module will enhance your understanding of how factors in the healthcare system, community and society shape the breastfeeding parent-infant dyad's experience. You will consider a wide range of socio-ecological factors that can have positive and negative influences on breastfeeding.

Topics:

- AHS Breastfeeding Strategy
- Baby-Friendly Initiative
- International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes
- Continuity of care
- Peer support
- Health equity
- Breastfeeding rights

- Breastfeeding in emergency situations

Duration: 1 hour

Module 10 – Breastfeeding Transitions

Date completed:

From birth to early childhood, there are many transitional periods that breastfeeding parents and infants face. In this module, you will learn how to best support breastfeeding dyads through these transitions, including introducing complementary foods, returning to work or school and weaning.

Topics:

- Complementary feeding
- Return to work or school
- Breastfeeding during pregnancy
- Breastfeeding children of different ages
- Extended breastfeeding
- Early postpartum lactation suppression
- Weaning

Duration: 1 hour

Module 11 – Breastfeeding Support for Preterm, Small & Sick Infants

Date completed:

This module will give you knowledge and practical strategies to support families in breastfeeding their preterm, small and sick infants. You will explore the unique challenges these families face and learn how to deliver patient and family centered care that promotes successful breastfeeding in different infant health contexts. Through interactive content and case studies, you will learn how to best support these families across care settings.

Topics:

- Breastfeeding preterm, small and sick infants
- Oral feeding stages for breastfeeding infants
- The breastfeeding dyad relationship
- Informed feeding decisions and feeding goals
- Breastmilk expression
- Discharge from hospital
- Breastfeeding sustainability

Duration: 2.5 hours

Frequently asked questions

How do I access the course?

You can access the course through the University of Calgary CME&PD self-learning portal from any computer with internet. For the best experience, please use a desktop or laptop computer. Mobile devices (smartphones or tablets) are not recommended.

To self-enroll, you will first need to create a free ECME e-Learning profile at ecme.ucalgary.ca

After you have created a profile and logged in, you can enroll in each module individually or all modules at once.

Should I take the modules in order?

For the best learning experience, it is recommended that you take the 11 modules in the order listed in the syllabus (see pages 5-10). The modules have been developed to build on your knowledge as you move through the course.

How long do the modules take to complete?

Each module is assigned CME credit hours (see syllabus above). This is the average time it takes for a learner to complete the module (read the content and complete the learning activities). Variations in completion time are expected depending on what type of learner you are. The assigned credit hours do not include the time it takes to make extensive notes or read through all the linked content and additional resources.

Can I work at my own pace?

Yes, the modules are self-paced. This means you can:

- access the modules at anytime
- pause and return to a module
- take your time completing a module without ‘timing out’

Can I access this course after I complete it?

Yes. After you complete a module, you can continue to access it anytime with your ECME username and password.

Once you complete a module, you will have the option to download a PDF version of the module for future reference.

What makes the course content unique?

This course was developed for the Alberta context and was developed with attention to:

- a multidisciplinary approach across diverse practice areas
- the family’s informed feeding decisions
- gender and cultural diversity
- the continuum of care from birth to early childhood

What process was used to develop course content?

The course was developed collaboratively with multi-disciplinary subject matter experts across the continuum of care. Subject matter experts represented diverse practice settings in all regions of Alberta.

The modules were developed using:

- an evidence-informed approach
- a patient and family-centred care approach
- adult learning and instructional design principles

Who should take this course?

This course was developed for healthcare professionals in Alberta who support breastfeeding families across the continuum of care. This includes, but is not limited to physicians, midwives, nurses, dietitians, doulas, perinatal educators and lactation consultants. Healthcare students will also benefit from the course learnings.

Can I use this education to fulfill my professional development requirements?

Yes. After you finish each module, you will be able to download a certificate of completion to submit for professional development purposes.

The University of Calgary CME Breastfeeding Planning Committee has accredited each module with The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Mainpro+ Self-Learning) and The College of Family Physicians of Canada (Maintenance of Certification [MOC] Section 3 SAP). If you are a member of another professional college, you can submit this accredited learning towards your own professional development requirements.

If you are a Primary Care Alberta or Alberta Health Services employee, you may also record completion of this course in [MyLearningLink](#). Log in using your username and password and click on 'My Information' and 'Grades' to record module completion under 'External Learning Events'.

Can the modules in this course be used to prepare for the International Board Certified Lactation Consultant certification exam and recertification?

Yes, the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBCLCE) recognizes breastfeeding specific education that has received continuing education credit by another board or organization, including the University of Calgary CME. One Continuing Education Recognition Point (CERP) is equal to 60 minutes of education.

Please see the IBCLCE's requirements for certification and recertification here:

- [Certification](#)
- [Recertification](#)

Can this course be used to support the Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) designation?

Yes. This breastfeeding course includes information on each of the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding and will help support BFI competency requirements for direct care providers working in maternal-child facilities and programs.

How can I provide feedback on the course?

You will be asked to complete an evaluation survey when you complete each module. Please complete the surveys as your feedback will be used to improve the course.

Is this course mandatory?

While the course isn't considered mandatory, it is noted as a key element of the [Breastfeeding Policy](#). Breastfeeding education requirements for orientation and continuing education vary across practice areas and health agencies. Connect with your clinical educator or manager to determine the educational requirements for your practice area and/or program.

Printable resources

The following PDF resources have been developed to complement course learnings. You can print and/or save these for easy access after completing the modules.

For healthcare professionals

- [Breastfeeding Assessment Components](#)
- [The LEARN Model \(8.5x11\)](#)
- [The LEARN Model \(pocket-size\)](#)
- [Spectrum-Wide Management Strategies for Engorgement & Mastitis](#)
- [Strategies to Increase Milk Transfer](#)
- [Breastfeeding Terms & Definitions for Classification in Alberta](#)
- [8 Principles of Informed Feeding Decisions](#)

For parents

- [Deciding How to Feed Your Baby](#)
- [A Partner's Guide to Breastfeeding Support](#)
- [Your Baby's Feeding Cues](#)