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Waitemata DHB achieve high rates of breastfeeding mums

Breastfeeding wasn't always easy for new mum Ashlee Lilo but with the guidance and support from her midwife and lactation consultant at Waitakere Hospital, little Tyson is still reaping the benefits seven-months on.

The Henderson mum is one of the success stories that have gained maternity services across Waitemata DHB the seal of approval for their work to increase the number of mums successfully breastfeeding before leaving hospital.

Waitakere and North Shore hospitals received its' first four-yearly reaccreditation from Baby Friendly Aotearoa as a Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) facility. To recognise the consistent achievement, CEO at NZ Breastfeeding Alliance Jane Cartwright awarded Waitemata DHB with a koru statue in a special ceremony today (August 2) during World Breastfeeding Week.

Ashlee says her son Tyson started feeding well after birth but within a week of arriving home, she experienced pain while breastfeeding and it was believed Tyson had developed a tongue tie.

"My midwife had already been a great support but the lactation consultant showed me there was no tongue tie and that there were some other feeding positions that would help baby latch on better and keep me comfortable," she says.

"It was hard and tiring work getting into a good breastfeeding routine but it has been worth it and I feel very fortunate to be able to do it knowing we're giving him a good start at life."

BFHI accreditation is based on standards of compliance set by the World Health Organisation outlining a requirement to have at least 75 per cent of mums exclusively breastfeeding by the time they go home.

Waitemata DHB BFHI coordinator Eleanor Gates says Waitemata DHB has shown a significant commitment to breastfeeding over the past nine years including the establishment of a lactation consultant role.

"We know that breastfeeding lays the foundation for good health in infancy, childhood and adult life so it is hugely important for mums to feel comfortable and supported in those initial stages after childbirth," she says.

Waitemata DHB Chief Executive Dr Dale Bramley says the BFHI is another way Waitemata DHB promotes better health outcomes for patients, a key Board priority.

"Breastfeeding creates better health outcomes for babies providing optimal nutrition and protection against various illnesses and infections," he says.

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