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### **The One Best Way?** *Breastfeeding History, Politics, and Policy in Canada*

Tasnim Nathoo and Aleck Ostry  
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In recent years, breastfeeding has been prominently in the public eye in relation to debates on issues ranging from parental leave policies, work–family balance, public decency, the safety of our food supply, and public health concerns such as health care costs and the obesity “epidemic.”

Breastfeeding has officially been considered “the one best way” for feeding infants for the past 150 years of Canadian history. This book examines the history and evolution of breastfeeding policies and practices in Canada from the end of the nineteenth century to the turn of the twenty-first. The authors’ historical approach allows current debates to be situated within a broader social, political, cultural, and economic context.

Breastfeeding shifted from a private matter to a public concern at the end of the nineteenth century. Over the course of the next century, the “best” way to feed infants was often scientifically or politically determined, and guidelines for mothers shifted from one generation to the next. Drawing upon government reports, academic journals, archival sources, and interviews with policy-makers and breastfeeding advocates, the authors trace trends, patterns, ideologies, and policies of breastfeeding in Canada.

**Tasnim Nathoo** completed her graduate studies in health care and epidemiology and social work at the University of British Columbia. She currently works in the areas of reproductive health, mental health and addictions, and social policy. Her research interests include health theory, integrated medicine, and the relationship between individual experience and broader social change.

**Aleck Ostry** is a professor at the University of Victoria. He is a Canada Research Chair and holds a Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research Senior Scholar Award. He is an epidemiologist and historian and conducts a broad research program on the social determinants of health, with a focus on nutrition policy and food security.

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