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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN SANTA ROSA COUNTY CELEBRATES NATIONAL BREASTFEEDING MONTH



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Milton, FL — The Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County (DOH-Santa Rosa) is celebrating National Breastfeeding Month this August. This year's theme is Breastfeeding: Foundation of Life.

The Florida Department of Health works to promote breastfeeding as a vital health activity, and encourages breastfeeding-friendly hospitals, child care facilities, work places and communities.

How to feed a new baby is one of the first important decisions a family has to make, and most women who choose to breastfeed have a specific goal in mind.

Research shows:

- Breastfed infants have a reduced risk of infections, asthma, obesity and SIDS compared with formula-fed infants;
- Mothers who breastfeed have a reduced risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer and postpartum depression compared to mothers who don't breastfeed; and
- It's estimated that \$13 billion would be saved per year if 90 percent of U.S. infants were breastfed exclusively for six months.

To reach the goal of exclusive breastfeeding for at least six months, mothers need supportive work policies, infant and child-care at or near the workplace, and private facilities for expressing and storing breastmilk. It takes time and practice to learn how to breastfeed, both for mother and baby, and to establish a good milk supply.

Healthiest Weight Florida within the Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention, in partnership with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Healthy Start, and the Florida Child Care Food Program, has a variety of tools available for mothers and families, as well as employers, childcare facilities, hospitals and health care professionals. Visit <http://www.healthiestweightflorida.com/activities/breastfeeding.html> for more information.

The Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County WIC program offers resources and staff to help breastfeeding mothers. Elisabeth Jordan is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) with experience and a high level of specialized knowledge in breastfeeding to assist clients. She is available day or night, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to

answer questions and offer support to mothers who have made the important decision to breastfeed.

“It takes a strong commitment to successfully breastfeed,” Lis said. “That’s really half the battle. The other half is having a strong support system. It’s becoming more apparent that it truly does take a village for mothers to be successful, but it’s worth every effort when examining the positive health outcomes for all.”

DOH-Santa Rosa has also added a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor to its WIC program. Peer counselors are chosen from the same socio/economic/ethnic groups as WIC clients and have successfully breastfed their own babies. Breastfeeding peer counselors provide mother-to-mother basic breastfeeding education and support to pregnant and breastfeeding moms.

The DOH-Santa Rosa WIC program also offers breastfeeding classes and a breastfeeding support group, The Milky Way. Breastfeeding mothers do not have to participate in WIC to take advantage of the information and support these programs offer. Classes are held every Thursday and times vary to meet participants’ needs. The Milky Way meets at 5:00 p.m. the 4th Thursday of the month at the health department’s Milton location, 5527 Stewart Street. Women who would like to attend the support group, a class, or who are just looking for information and support, can contact Lis Jordan directly at 850-313-4035.

“Breastfeeding is a unique experience only a mother can give to her baby,” Lis said, “and my hope is that mothers will take comfort in knowing our WIC team is here to support them on their journey.”

For more information about the Florida WIC program call 1-800-342-3556 or visit www.FloridaWIC.org. To learn more about National Breastfeeding Month and the benefits of breastfeeding visit www.usbreastfeeding.org, www.Illi.org or www.flbreastfeeding.org.

About the Florida Department of Health

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