

August 16, 2017

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



Contact:

Debbie Stilphen, PIO
PIO.CHD57@flhealth.gov
(850) 564-2275

Milton, FL — The Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa is celebrating National Breastfeeding Month this August. This year's theme—Charting the Course Together—focuses on using data and measurement to build and reinforce the connections between breastfeeding and a broad spectrum of other health topics and initiatives.

The department is working 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, and hospitals and health care professionals. Visit <http://www.healthiestweightflorida.com/activities/breastfeeding.html> for more information.

As part of the department's Healthiest Weight Florida initiative, the Baby Steps to Baby Friendly project focuses on increasing breastfeeding initiation and duration among Florida women. Baby Steps to Baby Friendly supports hospitals wishing to improve and enhance maternity care

practices related to breastfeeding, including achieving the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, developed by the World Health Organization.

The department is currently partnered with 57 hospitals across the state, and 13 hospitals have already earned their Baby Friendly designation, with more expected this year. To learn more about Baby Steps to Baby Friendly, visit <http://www.healthiestweightflorida.com/activities/baby-steps.html>

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 is also adding 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 mothers do not have to participate in the program to take advantage of the information and support the classes provide. Classes are held every Thursday and times vary to meet participants’ needs. Women who would like to attend 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

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.