

August 4, 2021

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECOGNIZES WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK



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Tallahassee, FL.— The Florida Department of Health (DOH) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) are celebrating World Breastfeeding Week 2021 during August 1-7, 2021. This year's theme is ***Protect Breastfeeding: A Shared Responsibility.***

The World Breastfeeding Week 2021 theme encourages everyone to support breastfeeding mothers, babies and their families through creating a breastfeeding-friendly environment. Protecting breastfeeding ensures:

- Good health and prevents malnutrition, including under and over nutrition. Breastfeeding has positive lifelong health effects on infants, children, and mothers such as lower incidence of respiratory infections and ear infections for infants and children and reduced risk of breast and ovarian cancer for mothers. Breastfeeding also reduces the risk of childhood overweight and obesity compared to formula feeding.
- Food security even in times of crisis. Breastfeeding provides food security to infants from the very beginning of life, contributes to food security for the whole family, and ensures food security for babies even in times of household or widespread disasters, such as hurricanes.
- Improved Economics and Reduced Inequalities. Breastfeeding can help break the cycle of poverty for families, which impacts hunger and malnutrition. Breastfeeding provides an equal start for everyone. With no additional burden on household income, breastfeeding is a low-cost way of feeding babies and contributes to poverty reduction. Breastfeeding can also reduce costs to the health care system and employers by decreasing costs of hospitalizations, medications, and reduced absenteeism.
- A positive impact on the health of the planet in several ways:
 - ✓ Breastmilk is a sustainable and environmentally friendly resource.
 - ✓ Breastfeeding is readily available without needing other supplies.
 - ✓ Breastmilk production does not require the use of energy for manufacturing and does not create waste or air pollution.

To protect breastfeeding:

- Promote the implementation of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.
- Provide access to skilled breastfeeding counseling. Studies have shown that breastfeeding promotion interventions increases exclusive and any breastfeeding rates at 4-6 weeks and at 6 months.
- Encourage employers and communities to promote and protect breastfeeding, through posting signs “Breastfeeding Welcome Here” and providing private areas for breastfeeding if that is a breastfeeding family’s preference.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for infants for the first year of life and beyond, with the addition of appropriate complimentary foods when the infant is developmentally ready, around 6 months of age.

Florida WIC in Martin County:

For more information about the Florida WIC program and breastfeeding resources in Martin County, call 772-221-4986 or visit: <http://martin.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/clinical-and-nutrition-services/wic/index.html>

Virtual Event: Breastfeeding Celebration, August 20, 2021

In recognition of World Breastfeeding Month, the Martin County Healthy Start Coalition is hosting an education event to include guest speakers and prizes. To register and learn more: <https://www.mchealthystart.org/programs/virtual-breastfeeding-celebration/>

About the Florida Department of Health

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