

August 8, 2019

## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN OKALOOSA COUNTY RECOGNIZES NATIONAL BREASTFEEDING AWARENESS MONTH



### Contact

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**FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla.**— The Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) recognizes August as National Breastfeeding Awareness Month. Black Breastfeeding Week is Aug. 25-31. During the month of August, mothers who are breastfeeding are invited to visit the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) clinic in Fort Walton Beach or Crestview to breastfeed or pump. You do not need to be a WIC client to participate.

“Breastfeeding provides numerous health benefits to mothers and baby,” said Dr. Karen Chapman, Director of DOH-Okaloosa. “DOH-Okaloosa is committed to promoting the benefits of breastfeeding in the community at work sites, child care centers and hospitals.”

DOH-Okaloosa collaborates with work sites and child care centers to promote breastfeeding and develop breastfeeding-friendly policies. These policies support mothers who are breastfeeding.

There are many benefits in creating breastfeeding-friendly policies:

- Lower rates of absenteeism. Babies who are breastfed are sick less often than formula fed babies.<sup>1</sup>
- Better retention of employees. Employers that provide breastfeeding support programs have a lower turnover rate following maternity leave.<sup>2</sup>
- Higher productivity and company loyalty. Employers that provide supportive environments for breastfeeding may find that employees who breastfeed are more productive and loyal.<sup>3</sup>

Want to receive a Florida Breastfeeding Coalition-Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite award or become a Breastfeeding-Friendly Worksite? Contact [HealthyOkaloosa@flhealth.gov](mailto:HealthyOkaloosa@flhealth.gov) or 850-344-0661.

Benefits of breastfeeding for mothers and baby:

- It's free.<sup>4</sup>
- Lowers babies' risk of certain infections and diseases.<sup>5</sup>
- Babies can easily digest breastmilk.<sup>6</sup>
- Reduces risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).<sup>7</sup>
- May reduce mother's risk for breast and ovarian cancer and type 2 diabetes.<sup>8</sup>
- May help mother's lose weight after childbirth.<sup>9</sup>

DOH-Okaloosa holds free breastfeeding classes at its WIC clinics in Fort Walton Beach and Crestview.

- Fort Walton Beach. Second and fourth Tuesday of every month at 8 a.m. and every Tuesday 4:15 p.m.

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- Crestview. Second and fourth Tuesday of every month at 4:15 p.m. and every Thursday at 1 p.m.

For more information about WIC or to schedule a breastfeeding class call 850-833-9254 or 850-689-7858.

### **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.

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<sup>1</sup> Shealy KR, Li R, Benton-Davis S, Grummer-Strawn LM. The CDC Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> "Breastfeeding Benefits." Breastfeeding Benefits | WIC Breastfeeding. Accessed August 08, 2019. <https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/breastfeeding-benefits>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Hauck FR, et al. Breastfeeding and reduced risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome: A meta-analysis. Pediatrics. 2011 Jul;128(1):103–10.

<sup>8</sup> "Making the Decision to Breastfeed." Womenshealth.gov. March 14, 2019. Accessed August 08, 2019. <https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/making-decision-breastfeed>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid