

Press Release

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2010 World Breastfeeding Week

Most women have heard that breastfeeding gives babies a healthy start in life. To fit breastfeeding into their lives, however, mothers need the whole community to support their decision—beginning with the earliest days after their babies are born.

The **2010 World Breastfeeding Week** (August 1-7) theme, **“Breastfeeding Just 10 Steps! The Baby-Friendly Way,”** draws attention to simple steps that hospitals, health care providers, workplaces, the community, and families can take to help mothers achieve their breastfeeding goals.

Nearly all medical and professional organizations worldwide emphasize the importance of breastfeeding and the role of support for new mothers. Research is clear that breastfeeding is vital for infant growth and development, with a profound impact on both infant and maternal health. Breastfeeding provides nutritional and health advantages that last far beyond infancy, including reduced risk of acute otitis media, non-specific gastroenteritis, and severe lower respiratory tract infections, and sudden infant death syndrome. It has been shown to be vital for women’s health by lowering the mother’s risk of breast and ovarian cancer, diabetes, and even cardiovascular disease throughout life.

The World Health Organization American Academy of Pediatrics and other medical organizations recommend that babies exclusively breastfeed for at least a year and beyond to gain the maximum health advantages. These health outcomes also directly link to health care costs. In the U.S., it has been estimated that \$13 billion could be saved annually if women breastfed exclusively to six months.

According to Angela Smith, president of the International Lactation Consultant Association (IBCLC), many mothers choose not to breastfeed, or begin supplements or wean completely well before the recommended time.

“One of the biggest factors,” she says, “is that women do not always get the support they need from their community, employers, health care providers and all organizations who see new families can provide support to assure them that they are giving their babies the best nutrition and disease-fighting protection for life.”

The World Breastfeeding Week theme's emphasis on "Baby-Friendly" refers to the international Baby-Friendly Hospital initiative and focuses on "Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding". Research shows that these steps directly increase breastfeeding duration and exclusivity rates among breastfeeding mothers. The steps include establishing evidence-based policies, providing training for staff, helping mothers hold their babies skin-to-skin immediately after birth, avoiding supplements unless medically indicated, avoiding bottle nipples and pacifiers, eliminating free distribution of infant formula samples, and connecting mothers to support in the community once they are discharged.

According to Smith, support for breastfeeding extends to the rest of the community, as well, "we all have a role to play," Smith explains. Physicians and other health care providers can praise women for breastfeeding and encourage them to seek help if mothers have concerns. Employers can provide lactation rooms so that employees can express milk while they are away from their babies, and help them access lactation consultants who can help them fit breastfeeding into their work and schedule. Families can tell new mothers how proud they are that baby is breastfeeding-and offer to help with other household chores. Communities can also welcome breastfeeding mothers."

Celebrate World Breastfeeding Week on August 6th in Hoke County

A Hoke County Breastfeeding Coalition is currently being established to promote breastfeeding within our community. At the Hoke County Health Department, a monthly Breastfeeding Support Group Meeting is held to offer support for all interested breastfeeding moms. On Friday from 1-2:00 pm, August 6th, the Support Group Meeting will meet to celebrate World Breastfeeding World Week. Our speaker is Tammy Myatt, International Board Certified Lactation Consultant from Cape Fear Valley Hospital. Topic will be "Steps for Successful Breastfeeding". Other activities include an orientation of the latest breastfeeding supplies and offering breastfeeding classes within the community upon request. For any additional information about breastfeeding, contact **Vicki Thrower**, Breastfeeding Coordinator, at **875-2298**.

Enter Our Coloring Contest

To involve the families, we are having a Coloring Contest for children ages 2-9. Come by the WIC office to get our official coloring page for your child. Return entries to the WIC Office by 5:00 pm on August 3rd. One entry per child. Entries are the coloring page and may be colored using crayons, markers, watercolors, etc. A winner from ages 2-5 and from ages 6-9 will be announced at our World Breastfeeding Meeting on August 6th.