

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

Celeste Philip, MD, MPH
State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

August 1, 2017

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN FRANKLIN AND GULF CELEBRATES NATIONAL BREASTFEEDING MONTH

**Contact:**

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Port St. Joe, The Florida Department of Health in Franklin and Gulf Counties will be 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.

“One of the most highly effective preventive measures a mother can take to protect the health of her infant is to breastfeed,” said Marsha Lindeman, Administrator for the Florida Department of Health in Franklin and Gulf Counties. “The health department has Certified Lactation Counselors available to assist pregnant mothers. Additionally, our Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program continues to provide free breastfeeding classes at our health department locations.”

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.

Florida Department of Health in Gulf County

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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.

To promote breastfeeding in our local counties, DOH-Franklin and Gulf will host two events open to the public:

1. Gulf County Event: 'The Big Latch On'

When: August 4, 2017 from 10:00-11:30 AM EST

Where: Florida Department of Health in Gulf County – Port St. Joe location
2475 Garrison Avenue, Port St. Joe, 32456

What is the Big Latch On?

Global Big Latch On events take place at registered locations around the world, where women gather together to breastfeed and offer peer support to each other. Their friends, family and community join this celebration to promote and support breastfeeding. Hosting a Global Big Latch On event creates a lasting support network for the community.

2. Franklin County Event: 'Breastfeeding Awareness Walk'

When: August 5, 2017, registration begins at 5:30 PM EST

Where: Riverfront Park in Apalachicola
199 Water Street **Apalachicola, FL** 32320

The Breastfeeding Awareness walk helps celebrate and support breastfeeding moms in the Franklin County community. Refreshments and educational giveaways will be provided.

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> Local WIC agencies offer resources and staff to help breastfeeding mothers. WIC agencies may have International Board Certified Lactation Consultants who have a high level of specialized knowledge in breastfeeding to assist clients. WIC agencies also have Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Programs. The trained 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.

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.lli.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.

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