

Alabama celebrates Breastfeeding Awareness Month

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children are celebrating August as Breastfeeding Awareness Month. This year's theme is "Breastfeeding: Healthy Mothers and Healthy Babies."

The goal is to have at least 75 percent of all Alabama mothers breastfeeding at hospital discharge and 50 percent continuing to breastfeed until the infants are 6 months old. Currently, about half of Alabama mothers are initiating breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding is a means to promote and protect the health of mother and baby," says Michell Grainger, MSN, RNC, IBCLC, state lactation coordinator with the Division of WIC.

Research studies show that mothers who breastfeed have a reduced risk of developing osteoporosis and breast, uterine and ovarian cancers. Breastfeeding has been recognized as the optimal method of feeding an infant. Human milk provides immunological protection against a variety of illnesses and changes to meet the growing infant's nutritional needs. Mothers who breastfeed miss fewer work or school days because their babies are sick less often. Babies who are not breastfed are more likely to have ear and respiratory infections, allergies and diabetes.

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action celebrates breastfeeding awareness in countries all over the world. WIC and hospitals are working to promote breastfeeding as the optimal source of nutrition for all Alabama babies.

"We provide breastfeeding information to all prenatal participants, and breastpumps are available to WIC mothers who are returning to work or school," said Grainger.

For more information about breastfeeding or other maternal and child health issues in Alabama, please call the Healthy Beginnings Hotline at 1-800-654-1385.

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