

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



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 29, 2013

MEDIA CONTACT: Erica Holland

desk 850-595-6272

PUBLIC CONTACT: 850-595-6668x212

**HEALTH OFFICIALS ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY-WIDE SUPPORT
FOR BREASTFEEDING FAMILIES**

PENSACOLA, FL – Florida Department of Health in Escambia County (DOH-Escambia) celebrates World Breastfeeding Week from August 1-7, 2013. This year's theme, "Breastfeeding Support: Close to Mothers" highlights the importance of encouraging and enabling families to breastfeed.

Breastfeeding promotes long-term health effects for both mother and child. According to the World Health Organization and the American Academy of Pediatrics, children who are exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life have lower rates of respiratory infections, dermatitis, asthma, obesity, diabetes, childhood leukemia, and a lower risk of sudden infant death syndrome. In addition, mothers who breastfeed have decreased risks for breast and ovarian cancer. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), less than 20 percent of mothers and babies in Florida breastfeed. Successful breastfeeding begins with support of families, health care professionals, governments, employers, and communities.

DOH-Escambia's Breastfeeding Program educates WIC-participating pregnant women and new mothers about the benefits of breastfeeding. Mothers enrolled in the WIC program have access to a peer counselor who provides one-on-one counseling and follows the mother from pregnancy through the first year of the baby's life. The program also provides breast pumps to new mothers to support their transition back to work or to school. According to Anne Sanborn, IBCLC and DOH-Escambia's Breastfeeding Program Coordinator, "Every ounce counts. Even if a mother cannot exclusively breastfeed or is unable to produce enough milk to meet her baby's needs, any amount provided can make a difference to the health of both the baby and mother."

DOH-Escambia offers breastfeeding classes for all interested persons, including a class for Spanish-speaking clients held quarterly. Other local resources for breastfeeding information and support include area hospitals, Baptist Health Care and Sacred Heart Health System, and the La Leche League.

Support is important in families, the community, and the workplace. Healthcare organizations, childcare centers, retailers, and employers can adopt policies and practices that support and encourage breastfeeding as the normal and most desirable feeding method for infants.

For more information about breastfeeding resources, visit www.EscambiaHealth.com or call the DOH-Escambia's Breastfeeding Program at 850.595.6668, ext. 212.

###