



# NEWS RELEASE

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF HEALTH

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Health Department Supports World Breastfeeding Week

**DUPAGE COUNTY**—World Breastfeeding Week is August 1-7, and the DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) will celebrate the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) theme, “Support breastfeeding for a healthier planet.”

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This year’s will focus on the impact of infant feeding on the environment/climate change and the imperative to protect, promote and support breastfeeding for the health of the planet and its people. To learn more, visit [www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org](http://www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org).

“It’s especially important during this pandemic to encourage and support breastfeeding as the natural and healthy choice that provides both baby and families, a healthy and strong start,” said Karen Ayala, Health Department Executive Director.

Health experts around the world recommend exclusive breastfeeding (nothing but breast milk) for six months and continued breastfeeding after a baby begins solid food up to age 1 or 2. Human milk is full of antibodies that help protect babies from many diseases, including ear infections, respiratory infections, diarrhea, allergies, leukemia and diabetes. Breastfeeding can even help the baby’s mother by reducing her risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, diabetes and heart disease.

DuPage County families enrolled in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program are invited to seek the support, education and encouragement of our highly trained and credentialed staff members.

The DCHD WIC staff includes eight International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) Specialists, five Breastfeeding Peer Counselors (BFPC) and Certified Health Professionals trained to provide breastfeeding support. We collaborate with Amita Health and Northwestern Central DuPage Hospital to support breastfeeding mothers by visiting at the most crucial time, when our clients deliver.

To apply for WIC services, schedule an appointment or learn more, DuPage County residents may call (630) 682-7400.

**-More-**



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DCHD continues to provide curbside pick-up, a safe method for families to obtain their WIC food benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, nurses, dietitians and nutritionists provide quality nutrition counseling and Family Case Management services by phone, which allows clients access to additional food and community resources while staying safe at home.

The Illinois Department of Human Services fiscal year 2021 Nutrition Education Plan focuses on increasing breastfeeding exclusivity rates at 12 weeks to 20 percent and duration rates at 6 months to 35 percent. The latest data available shows 15.8 percent of infants between the ages of 11 to 13 weeks enrolled in the DCHD WIC Program are exclusively breastfed, while the statewide average is 8.7 percent. At age 6-months, 30.15 percent of DCHD infants are still breastfed, compared to the statewide average of 16.77 percent.

Even during the Coronavirus Pandemic, the CDC still recommends breast milk as the best protection against many infections and an excellent source of nutrients for infants. Breastfeeding specialist are available at the DCHD to help women with their breastfeeding decisions in conjunction with their healthcare providers and family.

Visit <https://www.dupagehealth.org/444/Women-Infants-and-Children-WIC> to learn more about the DuPage County Health Department's WIC Supplemental Nutrition Program.

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