

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**WASHTENAW COUNTY WOMEN, INFANTS, & CHILDREN (WIC)
PROGRAM
CELEBRATES WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK**

Every August Washtenaw County WIC promotes the value of breastfeeding for the health of Women, Infants and Children by observing WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK (August 1-7th) as part of MICHIGAN BREASTFEEDING MONTH (August 1-31st). This year's activities will include honoring breastfeeding by presenting certificates of recognition to all WIC breastfeeding moms, distributing gift bags to all WIC moms who are currently breastfeeding, and holding a drawing for a grand prize for moms who have been breastfeeding longer than 6 months. This year's theme for World Breastfeeding Week is, Exclusive Breastfeeding: The Gold Standard *Safe, Sound, Sustainable*. Exclusive breastfeeding is:

- SAFE because it contains protective factors which help to prevent and fight infections, such as diarrhea and pneumonia, and reduce the risk of allergic conditions, particularly asthma.
- SOUND because nutrients in breastmilk are present in the right *quantity* and they are of special *quality*. Formula and other foods contain nutrients in different amounts, and of very different quality.
- SUSTAINABLE because it helps a household's food security. So long as an infant's mother is there, breastmilk is available.

Breast milk is widely acknowledged to be the most complete form of nutrition for infants, with a range of benefits for infants' health, growth, immunity, and development. The benefits of breastfeeding include decreased new cases or severity of diarrhea, respiratory infections, and ear infections, among others, and reduced cost to the family. In addition, breastfeeding has been shown to improve maternal health, with demonstrated effects, including earlier return to prepregnancy weight, reduced risk of premenopausal breast cancer, and reduced risk of osteoporosis, continuing long after the postpartum period. In general, the American Academy of Pediatrics considers breastfeeding to be "the ideal method of feeding and nurturing infants".

(More)

The Washtenaw County WIC Program provides information about breastfeeding to women during pregnancy and after delivery to assure that breastfeeding will get off to a good start. WIC full time breastfeeding moms receive carrots and tuna in addition to WIC specific nutritious foods such as; milk, cheese, eggs, iron-fortified cereal, vitamin C-rich juice and peanut butter/dried beans. Furthermore, breast pumps are provided for breastfeeding women upon assessment.

WIC has a strong commitment to breastfeeding promotion and support. Washtenaw County WIC has aligned its breastfeeding promotion strategies with the Healthy People 2010 Goals to “increase the proportion of mothers who breastfeed their babies to 75% in the early postpartum period (birth to 6 months), 50% continuing to breastfeed at 6 months, and 25% continuing at 1 year.” The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months and continued breastfeeding for 1 year or as long as mutually desired by the mom and baby.

The WIC Special Supplemental Nutrition Program serves to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, & children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk by providing foods for infants (birth-12 months), food for pregnant and postpartum women and children (under 5 years of age), nutrition education, high risk nutrition counseling, health care referrals, and breastfeeding promotion and support. WIC is funded by USDA through the Michigan Department of Public Health. To learn more about WIC, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/aboutwic/>.