



Public Health
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WARREN COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT

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For Immediate Release

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August is Breastfeeding Awareness Month

Communities Need to Work Together to Provide Support for Breastfeeding Mothers

August is Breastfeeding Awareness Month (BAM) in Ohio and Aug. 1-7 is World Breastfeeding Week (WBW). Research suggests that breastfeeding is a key modifiable factor for disease for both mothers and infants. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that Ohio's 2018 breastfeeding initiation rate of 81.9 percent ranks 36th in the nation. For this year's Breastfeeding Awareness Month, Ohio will adopt the theme: Empower Families, Support Breastfeeding. This theme focuses on the importance of supporting all members of a breastfeeding family as well as working to advocate for breastfeeding supportive environments in and around local communities.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and World Health Organization, recommends feeding only breast milk for the first six months of life and continuing to breastfeed along with other appropriate solid food for the first year and beyond.

With the monetary and lifesaving benefits of breastfeeding, support is needed in many different areas, including hospitals and birth centers, worksites, and our communities. Ultimately, our whole society benefits from having healthier mothers, babies and children when breastfeeding is promoted, protected and supported.

One of the most important things businesses and the community can do is to allow mothers to feel comfortable nursing in public. Hungry babies need to eat and Ohio law (*Section 3781.55 of the Ohio Revised Code*) allows breastfeeding in public. Businesses can show their support by placing the "Breastfeeding Welcome Here" universal sign for breastfeeding in their windows and educate their staffs on the acceptance of breastfeeding in their establishments. They can also encourage their employees and provide a private space (other than a bathroom) to pump. This will increase employee retention and reduce medical costs.

Hospitals can adopt the *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding* as an indication that they are dedicated to supporting new mothers who choose to breastfeed. By eliminating formula gifts to breastfeeding mothers, they send the message that they believe mothers can make enough milk to breastfeed exclusively.

Breastfeeding is a personal choice, but communities play a vital role in informing and supporting a mother's decision to breastfeed her baby. Returning our communities back into a breastfeeding supportive culture will take efforts by family, friends, employers, educational institutions, hospitals and businesses.

The Warren County Health District offers support to families in the area of breastfeeding/infant feeding. Appointments for one on one support are available in addition to breastfeeding/infant feeding classes that are offered throughout the year. The next infant feeding/breastfeeding class will be held on Tuesday, August 27th at 1:00 pm. at WCHD, 416 S. East St. in Lebanon. Please contact one of our breastfeeding specialists at 513-695-1477 to register or visit our website at www.warrenchd.com for more information.

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