

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

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Contact: Andrea McKinney
(239) 252-8049

PROMOTING BREASTFEEDING ACCESS FOR WORKING MOMS FOCUS OF MONTH-LONG CAMPAIGN

COLLIER — This August, the Florida Department of Health in Collier County (DOH-Collier) is celebrating National Breastfeeding Awareness Month. With the launch of weekly breastfeeding support groups, Collier County is working to promote breastfeeding as a vital health activity and encourage breastfeeding-friendly hospitals, child care facilities, work places, and communities.

“The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life and thereafter, for as long as is mutually desired by the mother and infant,” says Renee Williams, RD, LD/N, IBCLC, DOH-Collier Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) Coordinator. “This recommendation may be challenging for the working mom, who will need sufficient break time from work as well as a private space in which to express her milk. Providing such accommodations to working moms is an advantage for employers as well, as breastfeeding lowers healthcare costs, and breastfeeding employees are less likely to be absent from work.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, mothers who breastfeed their children are at a healthier weight on average than those who do not. They also have a lower risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, breast and ovarian cancer. Children who are breastfed have a lower risk for developing respiratory and gastrointestinal infections, asthma, obesity, Type 2 diabetes and SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).

In August, the Collier WIC Program is offering free breastfeeding support groups at all WIC locations: Immokalee – Mondays @ 3:30, Golden Gate – Thursdays @ 11:00, and Naples – Thursdays @ 11:30. All pregnant or breastfeeding women are invited to these support groups where they can meet other mothers, share breastfeeding experiences, and access breastfeeding information including tips for the working mom. These groups are led by WIC breastfeeding and nutrition staff.

To reach the goal of exclusive breastfeeding for at least six months, mothers need supportive maternity leave policies, flexible work hours, infant and child-care at or near the workplace, and private facilities for expressing and storing breast milk. It takes time and practice to learn how to breastfeed, both for mother and baby, and to establish a good milk supply.

For more information on the Florida Breastfeeding Coalition's Quality Maternity Care Initiative, visit: <http://flbreastfeeding.org/hospital.htm>.

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Healthiest Weight Florida is a public-private collaboration bringing together state agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses and entire communities to help Florida's children and adults make

consistent, informed choices about healthy eating and active living. To learn more about how to be active and make nutritious food choices visit www.healthiestweightflorida.com.

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) and on Facebook. For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.floridahealth.gov.