

Mission:

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



Rick Scott
Governor

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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN GILCHRIST COUNTY PROMOTES AWARENESS DURING NATIONAL BREASTFEDDING MONTH

TRENTON — During the month of August, the Florida Department of Health in Gilchrist County is celebrating National Breastfeeding Awareness Month by highlighting services offered through the department and in partnership with other groups.

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, and SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).

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 breastmilk. It takes time and practice to learn how to breastfeed, both for mother and baby, and to establish a good milk supply.

Mothers should be aware of resources available locally through the following programs:

- The **Florida WIC Program** offers counseling and breastfeeding materials to pregnant and breastfeeding clients. WIC also participates in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) breastfeeding peer counseling program.
- **Florida's Healthy Start** promotes healthy behaviors and provides services to pregnant women, women in between pregnancies, infants and children to obtain the support needed to reduce the risks for poor health outcomes.
- The **Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention** supports the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, a recognition established by Baby-Friendly USA promoting human milk as the best source of nourishment for new babies. Evidence shows several specific practices in birth facilities can significantly affect breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity

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

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](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyFla). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.floridahealth.gov. You can reach the Gilchrist County Health Department at 352-463-3120.

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