

Show-Me Health

Topic: World Breastfeeding Awareness

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These days, we have many ways to be able to communicate with each other and communication is more important than ever. We're in constant contact with those in our lives through Facebook, cell phones, and instant messaging. That's why this year the World Health Organization wants to focus on communication, and has chosen "Talk to Me, A 3D Experience" as the theme of World Breastfeeding Awareness week.

"When we look at breastfeeding support, we tend to see it in two dimensions: time (from pre-pregnancy to weaning) and place (the home, community, health care system, etc...). But neither has much impact without a third dimension-communication!" says the World Health Care Organization.

Communication allows us to learn from other mothers who have been where we are now. Relating to people who truly understand can help calm our fears. Good communication with your health care providers is also essential, both during pregnancy, and immediately after birth. Knowledgeable doctors, midwives, nurses and lactation consultants, and breastfeeding educators can help get you on the path to a happy, successful nursing relationship with your baby.

As a WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, I talk with moms during various stages of their pregnancy. I support moms and their feeding choices, and provide them with the information they need. I am available to come to the hospital and homes and check on mothers and their infants.

Livingston County Health Center WIC office recently received good news that our application for the "Breastfeeding Friendly WIC Clinic" designation has been approved for the fiscal year 2012. The health center had applied for and implemented the necessary steps in providing the best support necessary for WIC moms to be successful meeting their breastfeeding goals to receive the designation. The entire WIC staff has received breastfeeding training and breastfeeding support services have been expanded.

Evidence shows that implementing "best practices" in breastfeeding will increase the number of women who choose to and continue to breastfeed. The additional funding the clinic will receive from achieving this designation will help to accommodate the greater need of staff to support breastfeeding and expand these supportive services.

Only 20 local WIC agencies in the state of Missouri received this designation and additional the funding. The Health Center is proud of their WIC staff in this accomplishment and of the exceptional breastfeeding services we already provide to breastfeeding moms and the new services

and continued support of breastfeeding moms that we will be working to provide throughout this next year.

At the Health Center, we do offer many services to help expecting mothers to get ready for breastfeeding. Our prenatal breastfeeding class meets one evening every other month, and is open to expectant mothers and their partners. The class covers breastfeeding benefits, feeding cues, breastfeeding problems, returning to work, and what to expect during the first two weeks.

The Health Center also offers a monthly breastfeeding support group, open to pregnant and nursing mothers. The group meets on the second Tuesday of the month, and is a great way to get out of the house and meet other moms who are having similar experiences.

I serve as the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor for the health center, and I will be available more during regular health center hours thanks to our new “Breastfeeding Friendly” designation.

But, you can always find me on Facebook at LivingstonCounty BreastfeedingCounselor. I post topics on breastfeeding, and we also have a monthly support group message where moms can share current topics with each other. Let’s communicate with each other! I’m here to help.

All services of the health center are provided on a non-discriminatory basis.