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## FLORIDA HEALTH PROMOTES BREASTFEEDING DURING WORLD BREASTFEEDING MONTH



**Contact:**

Ana M Nieves

[Ana.Nieves@flhealth.gov](mailto:Ana.Nieves@flhealth.gov)

321-690-6488

**Brevard County** — The Florida Department of Health in Brevard County is highlighting the importance of breastfeeding during National Breastfeeding Month. Breastfeeding plays a critical role in healthy development from the very beginning of a child’s life.

“We aim to educate residents and nursing mothers about the significance of Breastfeeding,” stated DOH-Brevard Interim Administrator Miranda Hawker. “Breast milk provides the ideal nutrition for infants, and its benefits extend well beyond basic nutrition.”

Earlier this year, the department launched the Florida Healthy Babies initiative and has invested nearly two million dollars in helping hospitals around the state promote “Baby Steps to Baby Friendly” in order to support mothers in practicing exclusive breastfeeding for their infants. Breast milk contains antibodies that help protect infants from common childhood illnesses.

North Brevard WIC hosted a community breastfeeding support group attended by moms and babies from the Titusville area. Representatives from multiple agencies came together at a community wide Breastfeeding Coalition meeting held in Viera where best practices and networking were successfully shared. The Melbourne WIC clinic hosted a weeklong Breastfeeding Welcome table in the clinic lobby. One hundred customized water bottles were given away to all prenatal and breastfeeding moms during this week and 100 breastfeeding moms also received a special goodie bag made by the lactation staff. The bags were decorated and filled with nursing pads, hand sanitizer, gold chocolate nugget candy and hand custom knitted caps donated by local knitters in the community.

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.

For more information about the Florida WIC program call 1-800-342-3556 or visit [www.FloridaWIC.org](http://www.FloridaWIC.org). To learn more about the benefits of breastfeeding visit [www.Illi.org](http://www.Illi.org); or [www.flbreastfeeding.org](http://www.flbreastfeeding.org).

For more information about Baby Steps to Baby Friendly visit the Florida Healthiest Weight [website](#).

For resources on breastfeeding and print outs for working moms, visit our activity page [here](#).

### **About Healthiest Weight Florida**

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](http://www.healthiestweightflorida.com).

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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