



Jackson County Health Department

1715 Lansing Avenue • Jackson, MI 49202 • Phone (517) 788-4420 • Fax (517) 788-4373



Breastfeeding Awareness Month promotes positive outcomes of breastfeeding

Black Breastfeeding Week is Aug. 25-31

World Breastfeeding Week is Aug. 1-7

LANSING, Mich. – To help promote early breastfeeding success and positive outcomes, August has been declared Breastfeeding Awareness Month in Michigan and Aug. 25-31 has been named Black Breastfeeding Week by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

Lack of promotional and educational efforts about the benefits of breastfeeding result in lower breastfeeding rates in many communities, including communities of color. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), black infants are 21 percent less likely to have ever been breastfed than any other race.

In Michigan, only 77.2 percent of non-Hispanic black women initiate breastfeeding compared to 90.1 percent of non-Hispanic white women. And, only 38.1 percent continue to breastfeed at three months compared to 62.6 percent of non-Hispanic white women, according to the CDC's [2017 MI Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System](#).

For every 1,000 babies born in Michigan, about seven die by age 1, and among black babies that number is more than double. Black infants have the highest infant death rate compared to other races and ethnicities in Michigan.

According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, all babies, with rare exceptions, should be breastfed or receive expressed human milk exclusively for the first six months of life. All babies who are breastfed receive immunities, but the greatest immunity occurs when a baby is exclusively breastfed.

“Each and every drop of breast milk provided to babies makes a difference; one feeding at a time,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, MDHHS chief medical executive and chief deputy director for health. “But, balancing work, school, family, life and breastfeeding takes commitment and a supportive community. Michigan is dedicated to expanding public understanding of the critical impact breastfeeding has on improving the health of all infants and mothers and reducing infant mortality rates within the black community.”

Activities are planned throughout the state to draw attention to the importance of breastfeeding for the health and well-being of mothers and children. A Community Breastfeeding Walk is slated for Thursday, Aug. 15, starting at 10 a.m. Families should gather at Frank J. Kelley Capitol Walkway, located between the Michigan State Capitol and the Hall of Justice in Lansing.

The purpose of the event is to bring awareness and change to the systems that impact breastfeeding families across the state. This year's walk is hosted by Michigan Department of Health and Human

Working together to create and promote a healthy community through
disease prevention and control,
health education, environmental protection and emergency preparedness.

Services (MDHHS) Maternal Infant Health program, MDHHS Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Michigan Breastfeeding Network, Willow Tree, DJ Fudgie, EPO and Next Generation Lactation Service.

In Jackson, the local Breastfeeding Coalition will be hosting “The Big Latch On” event on Saturday, August 3rd at the Henry Ford Allegiance Health Auditorium. This is a free, globally organized event where moms, babies and families can celebrate breastfeeding together as a community. For more information, visit the Coalition’s Facebook page “Breastfeeding Support Jackson Michigan” and look for this upcoming event.

The Jackson WIC Program will be sponsoring a Rock-n-Rest station at the Jackson County Fair again this year, August 4-10, inside the Herman Gumper Exhibition Building. Look for signs when you get to the fair. You can feed your baby, change your baby, pump milk for your baby, or just take a break from the heat and rock your baby!

News Flash! The WIC Program can now assist any mom and baby in Michigan, eligible for WIC or not, with breastfeeding issues. WIC strongly supports breastfeeding families and is a great community resource, and now every breastfeeding mom can utilize their breastfeeding support services! WIC employs a variety of breastfeeding professionals, including Peer Counselors and IBCLCs (International Board Certified Lactation Consultants). Tell a friend who needs breastfeeding help or advice to take advantage of these free services in Jackson by calling 517-768-2121.

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