



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104
Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5520

www.adph.org

For breastfeeding to succeed, mothers need support

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Michell Grainger
(334) 206-5673

“Mother Support: Going for the Gold!” is the theme the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action selected for Breastfeeding Awareness Month, August 2008, to tie breastfeeding in with the Summer Olympic Games. As every country sends its best athletes to compete, the importance of offering each child a healthy start in life is emphasized. The word “gold” raises awareness of the superiority of breastfeeding. The theme calls on health professionals, employers, families and communities to provide a breastfeeding friendly environment that helps new mothers reach their breastfeeding goals.

The Alabama Department of Public Health and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) educate pregnant women and new mothers about the health benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and child. Another goal of WIC is to increase the prevalence of breastfeeding among new mothers.

“For optimal growth and development we call for greater support for mothers in achieving the gold standard of infant feeding—breastfeeding exclusively for six months and providing appropriate complementary foods with continued breastfeeding,” Michell Grainger, state lactation coordinator with the WIC Program, said.

The American Academy of Pediatrics supports breastfeeding as “uniquely superior for infant feeding” and recommends that breastfeeding start as soon after birth as possible.

Breastfeeding’s benefits to the infant are as follows:

- * Increases immunity to infectious diseases
- * Enhances cognitive development
- * Reduces risk of obesity, diabetes and asthma
- * Reduces risk of death in infants over 1 month of age

The benefits of breastfeeding to mothers include the following:

- * Reduced risk of pre-menopausal breast cancer and ovarian cancer
- * Reduced risk of spinal and hip fractures in postmenopausal women
- * Help in returning to pre-pregnancy weight more readily
- * Fewer sick visits to the doctor and reduced health care costs

WIC provides prenatal counseling on the benefits of breastfeeding, furnishes breastfeeding supplies and pumps, and allows breastfeeding mothers to continue to receive benefits for up to one year after the baby's birth if the mother continues to breastfeed.

In addition, WIC provides a peer counseling program in several Alabama counties. Present or former WIC participants who have breastfed their babies serve as peer counselors. After extensive training, these counselors provide support to pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.

The Healthy People 2010 objectives of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are as follows:

- * To have at least 75 percent of mothers breastfeed their infants in the early postpartum period
- * To have 50 percent continue breastfeeding through 6 months of age
- * For 25 percent to continue breastfeeding at 1 year of age.

For more information contact Michell Grainger, M.S.N., R.N.C., I.B.C.L.C., State Lactation Coordinator, WIC Program, Bureau of Family Health Services, at (334) 206-5673, mgrainger@adph.state.al.us.

-30-

8/7/08

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.