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## THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECOGNIZES WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK

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**Okeechobee, FL** — The Florida Department of Health in Okeechobee County recognizes World Breastfeeding Week 2021. World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) occurs annually on the first week of August and represents a global celebration of breastfeeding efforts including breastfeeding promotion, support, education, research, progressive trends, and normalizing breastfeeding as the gold standard of infant nutrition. WBW aims to highlight the huge benefits that breastfeeding can bring to both the health and welfare of babies, as well as a wider push for Maternal health. Breastfeeding is the best way to give babies all the necessary nutrients and antibodies, which provide a vital shield of protection against disease, such as diarrhea and pneumonia. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend exclusive breastfeeding for about 6 months, and then continuing breastfeeding while introducing complementary foods until your child is 12 months old or older. This provides your child with best nutrition that supports growth and development.

“Breastfeeding is the ideal food for newborns and infants. Adolescents and adults who were breastfed have less chance to be overweight or to have obesity, they demonstrate better IQ test results. Breastfeeding is good for mothers as well as for children. It lowers risk of breast and ovarian cancer later in life, the risk of diabetes and postpartum depression.

According to UNICEF, improving breastfeeding practices globally could save the lives of more than 820,000 children every year. UNICEF’s data shows there are only 40% of babies, under six

months old, who are exclusively breastfed. According to Okeechobee County WIC data, about 26% of Okeechobee babies are breastfeeding at 6 months. Improving this rate could save lives and improve infant mortality.

Breastfeeding gives babies a healthy start in life it's not just good for babies- it's good for mom, too. Of course, there are many different demands on busy [mothers](#), meaning that women who may want to breastfeed their babies haven't always got the support to continue breastfeeding. Busy working schedules, alongside the many other challenges that modern women face can mean that women don't always feel that breastfeeding their baby is something that is an achievable option to them.

The goal of the Florida Department of Health in Okeechobee County WIC office is to equip WIC moms with the information, resources, and support needed to successfully breastfeed for as long as they wish. For more information on the Florida Department of Health WIC Program or breastfeeding, contact the WIC office (863) 462-5795. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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

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