



Jeb Bush
Governor

M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D.
Secretary, Department of Health

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Friday, July 28, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Jeannine Mallory, Public Information Director
PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
727-824-6908 (for media use only)

World Breastfeeding Week is August 1 – 7
Breastfeeding: Best for Baby, Best for Mom

There are many benefits to breastfeeding. Even if you are able to do it for only a short time, your baby's immune system can benefit from breast milk. Here are many other benefits of breast milk for a mother, her baby, and others.

Benefits for baby

- Breast milk is the most complete form of nutrition for your baby. A mother's milk has just the right amount of fat, sugar, water and protein that is needed for her baby's growth and development.
- Most babies find it easier to digest breast milk than formula. As a result, breastfed infants grow exactly the way they should. They tend to gain less unnecessary weight and to be leaner. This may result in them being less overweight later in life.
- Premature babies do better when breastfed, compared to premature babies who are fed formula.
- Breastfed babies score slightly higher on IQ tests, especially breastfed babies who were born prematurely.

Benefits for mom

- Nursing uses up extra calories, making it easier to lose the weight you gained during your pregnancy. It also helps your uterus to get back to its original size and lessens any bleeding you may have after giving birth.
- Breastfeeding, especially exclusive breastfeeding, delays the return of normal ovulation and menstrual cycles. However, you should still talk with your doctor or nurse about birth control choices.
- Breastfeeding lowers your risk of breast and ovarian cancers, and possibly the risk of hip fractures and osteoporosis after menopause.
- Breastfeeding makes your life easier! It saves time and money. You don't have to buy, measure and mix formula. There are no bottles to warm in the middle of the night! You can give your baby immediate satisfaction by providing your breast milk when your baby is hungry.
- Physical contact is important to newborns and can help them feel more secure, warm and comforted. Breastfeeding requires you take some quiet relaxed time for yourself and your baby. This can help you quickly bond with your baby. Breastfeeding mothers may have increased self-confidence and feelings of closeness and bonding with their infants.



Jeb Bush
Governor

M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D.
Secretary, Department of Health

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

(MORE)

WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK – Page 2

Risks of Not Breastfeeding

- Recent studies show that babies who are not exclusively breastfed for at least six months are more likely to develop a wide range of infectious diseases – including ear infections, diarrhea and respiratory illnesses. They may also have more hospitalizations. Breast milk has agents called antibodies in it to help protect your baby from bacteria and viruses.
- Infants born in the U.S. who are not breastfed have a 21% higher rate of post-neonatal infant death.
- Some studies suggest that infants who are not breastfed may have higher rates of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) in the first year of life, and higher rates of Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, lymphoma, leukemia, Hodgkin's disease, overweight and obesity, high cholesterol and asthma.
- Also, when you breastfeed, there are no bottles and nipples to sterilize. Unlike human milk straight from the breast, infant formula has a chance of being contaminated.

The Surgeon General recommends that babies be fed with breast milk only (no formula) for the first six months of life. It is *better* to breastfeed for six months and *best* to breastfeed for 12 months, or for as long as you and your baby wish. You can introduce solid foods when your baby is six months old, while you continue to breastfeed.

The Pinellas County Health Department's WIC program provides breastfeeding support and lactation (breastfeeding) consultation with an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant. For information about WIC, please call the Pinellas County Health Department at (727) 824-6997.

For more information, visit www.4women.gov/breastfeeding/. You may also call the National Women's Health Information Center at 1-800-994-9662. Call the Helpline Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., EST. If you call after hours, you will be given the option to leave a message, and a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor will return your call on the next business day. Information is available in both English and Spanish.

###

The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of our community through public and private partnerships in an environment that respects diversity. www.PinellasHealth.com