



# JEFFERSON COUNTY General Health District

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## News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Breastfeeding Awareness Month**

**STEUBENVILLE, OH** - August is Breastfeeding Awareness Month, and this year's theme is Enabling Breastfeeding; Making a Difference for Working Parents. Both large and small business owners reap substantial benefits by supporting employees who wish to continue breastfeeding upon returning to work. These benefits include decreased healthcare costs, decreased employee absenteeism, increase in employee retention, increase in employee morale and loyalty, and positive public relations. Breastfeeding has many known health benefits for mothers and babies and is widely accepted as an effective strategy to promote positive health outcomes for both mothers and their babies. Research suggests that breastfeeding is a key factor in reducing risk of disease for both mothers and infants, including respiratory illness, ear infections, allergies, and some cancers.

To help raise awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding and to recognize and celebrate the women who breastfeed or have breastfed their babies, WIC will be holding a Breastfeeding Awareness Month Resource Fair on Friday, August 18, from 12 to 2 pm in the Community Room of the Jefferson County Tower Building. Several local agencies and providers will be on hand to share information about their services. There will be a craft for kids to complete with their parent, Nutrition Education information, raffle baskets, light luncheon, and of course breastfeeding information.

Breastfeeding is a personal choice, but communities play a vital role in informing and supporting a mother's decision to breastfeed her baby. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and continued breastfeeding with the addition of appropriate solid food for the first year and beyond. The Ohio Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program helps provide breastfeeding support for Ohio families and health professionals across the state.

One of the most important ways businesses and communities can support this work is to help mothers feel comfortable nursing in public. Hungry babies need to eat and Ohio law (Section



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3781.55 of the Ohio Revised Code) allows breastfeeding in public. Businesses can show their support by placing a “Breastfeeding Welcome Here” sign for in their windows and educate their staff about the acceptance of breastfeeding in their establishments. They can also encourage their employees who breastfeed and provide a private space (other than a bathroom) to pump. This will help increase employee retention and reduce medical costs.

If your business or establishment would like a free “Breastfeeding Welcome Here” decal, or if you would like more information about breastfeeding, please join us on Friday or call Jefferson County WIC at 740-283-8530.