

WIC Peer Counselors Provide Breastfeeding Assistance

Exclusive breastfeeding is recognized worldwide as the healthiest choice for both mother and baby. It not only improves infant nutrition and promotes child development, but improves maternal health as well.

Studies show that babies who are not breastfed are at increased risk for:

- Bacterial and viral infections
- Developing obesity
- Sudden infant death syndrome
- Developing ear infections and serious lower respiratory tract infections
- Developing asthma, lymphoma, leukemia, and diabetes

Evidence also suggests that women who do not breastfeed:

- Take longer to lose the weight gained during pregnancy
- Are at increased risk of developing Type II Diabetes, ovarian cancer, and breast cancer

For all of these reasons, the Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) highly encourages mothers to breastfeed exclusively (no other foods or drinks) until their baby is six months old and continue when other foods are introduced at six months of age.

While most women are well aware of the benefits of breastfeeding, some may be a little nervous, not knowing what to expect, or how to handle setbacks, which is where the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Peer Counselors come in.

Peer Counselors use their own breastfeeding experience to assist other mothers by:

- Educating, supporting and encouraging new and expectant moms, and those going back to work.
- Teaching prenatal breastfeeding classes
- Educating pregnant women and mothers as their baby grows

This effort will not only improve the long-term health of mothers and babies, but will help lower medical costs, obesity and other chronic health issues in the long run.

To have a Peer Counselor assist you, contact:

Clinton County: 989-227-3137

Gratiot County: 989-875-1043

Montcalm County: 989-831-3625 or 989-831-3625