



JACKSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Public Health
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Almost Three out of Four Babies in Jackson County are Breastfed at Birth

Breastfeeding is recognized as the best source of nutrition for most infants and this fact is celebrated worldwide each August during Breastfeeding Promotion Month. The Jackson County Health Department recognizes the importance of breastfeeding as the normal and expected way to feed all babies and provides education, support, and counseling to help women breastfeed. Forty years of research has repeatedly shown that babies who are breastfed (especially breastfed exclusively) for three to six months, have lower risks for ear infections, eczema, gastrointestinal infections, asthma, diabetes, sudden infant death syndrome and obesity than formula fed babies. Additionally, mothers who breastfeed have reduced risk of premenopausal breast cancer, ovarian cancer, Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

“In Jackson County, 72% of mothers in the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program provided human milk to their babies during the last year. In the past month, 47% of 6 month old babies in the WIC program continued to breastfeed” says Paula Vineyard Most, MS, RD, Breastfeeding Coordinator with Jackson County Health Department. Data from a recent CDC report highlight significant racial disparities, with 81.4% of white women in Illinois and 58.7% of non-Hispanic black women initiating breastfeeding between 2011 and 2015. Some of the barriers to breastfeeding included earlier return to work, inadequate receipt of breastfeeding information from providers, and lack of access to professional breastfeeding support.¹

Throughout Illinois, local WIC agencies work within their communities to get mothers and babies off to a great start with breastfeeding. Continuing the education and counseling moms receive prenatally, WIC agencies work with their area hospitals to provide seamless support as moms come home from the hospital and transition back to work and school.

For more information about breastfeeding, contact Paula Vineyard Most at 618-684-3143 ext 117 or paulam@jchdonline.org. or visit the health department's website at www.jchdonline.org.

Reference: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6627a3.htm>

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