

# Florida WIC supports breastfeeding

The Florida WIC Program is a public health nutrition program that supports breastfeeding as the normal way of feeding and nurturing children. At present, approximately 80 percent of Florida WIC mothers start out breastfeeding, compared to 30 percent in 1990. Florida's success in increasing breastfeeding rates among WIC mothers is a result of dedicated staff members who provide breastfeeding information, counseling, and support to WIC clients.

Research has shown that children who are not breastfed have an increased risk of infections and illnesses that include diarrhea, ear infections, pneumonia, asthma, obesity, diabetes, some childhood cancers, learning disabilities, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Studies also show that women who breastfed have a decreased risk of breast and ovarian cancers, diabetes, and osteoporosis. Additionally, breastfeeding can help women lose the extra weight gained during pregnancy. Better health outcomes for both children and women are associated with increasing exclusivity and duration of breastfeeding. For more information, see *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding* at [www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calls/breastfeeding/index.html](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calls/breastfeeding/index.html).



**Researchers found a 60 percent reduction in the risk of SIDS for infants who received any amount of breast milk for any time period. Exclusive breastfeeding increases the risk reduction rate up to 73 percent.** Source: Hauck FR, et al. Breastfeeding and reduced risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome: A meta-analysis. *Pediatrics*. 2011 Jul;128(1):103-10.

**Breastfeeding has a positive impact on brain development.** Source: Deoni SCL, Dean III DC, Piryatinsky I, O'Muircheartaigh J, Waskiewicz N, Lehman K, Han M, Dirks H. Breastfeeding and early white matter development: A cross-sectional study. *NeuroImage*. 2013; 82:77-86.

**Among postmenopausal women, increased duration of lactation was associated with a lower prevalence of hypertension, diabetes, hyperlipidemia and cardiovascular disease.** Source: Schwarz EB, Ray RM, et al. Duration of lactation and risk factors for maternal cardiovascular disease. *Obstetrics and Gynecology*. 2009 May; 113(5):974-82.

**Shorter duration and non-exclusivity of breastfeeding were associated with increased risks of asthma-related symptoms in preschool children.** Source: Sonnenschein-van der Voort AM, et al. Duration and exclusiveness of breastfeeding and childhood asthma-related symptoms. *European Respiratory Journal*. July 20, 2011. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21778163>.

**Exclusive breastfeeding until the age of 4 months and partially thereafter was associated with a significant reduction of respiratory and gastrointestinal morbidity in infants.** Source: Duijts L, Jaddoe VW, Hofman A, Moll HA. Prolonged and exclusive breastfeeding reduces the risk of infectious diseases in infancy. *Pediatrics*. 2010; 126(1):e18-25.

**Mothers who have breastfed have better metabolic profiles.** Source: Gunderson EP, et al. Lactation and changes in maternal metabolic risk factors. *Obstetrics and Gynecology*. 2007; 109(3):729-38.

**Breastfeeding was inversely associated with pregnancy-related weight retention at 6 months postpartum.** Source: Krause KM, Lovelady CA, Peterson BL, Chowdhury N et. al. Effect of breast-feeding on weight retention at 3 and 6 months postpartum: data from the North Carolina WIC Program. *Public Health Nutrition*. 2010; 13:2019-2016.

**An estimated 53 percent of diarrhea hospitalizations and 27 percent of lower respiratory tract infections could have been prevented monthly by exclusive breastfeeding and 31 percent and 27 percent respectively by partial breastfeeding.** Source: Quigley MA, Kelly YJ, Sacker A. Breastfeeding and hospitalization for diarrheal and respiratory infection in the United Kingdom millennium cohort study. *Pediatrics*. 2007; 119(4):e837-e842.

**Adult women who were breastfed have lower levels of C reactive protein, a marker of risk for cardiovascular disease. Having been breastfed for longer durations was also associated with lower cholesterol levels for women, compared to shorter durations.** Source: Williams MJA, Williams SM, Poulton R. Breastfeeding is related to C reactive protein concentration in adult women. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*. 2006; 60:146-48.

**Having been breastfed is associated with a lower risk of Type 2 diabetes in adolescence and adulthood.** Source: Owen CG, et al. Does breastfeeding influence risk of Type 2 diabetes in later life? A quantitative analysis of published evidence. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 2006; 84: 1043-54.

**There is evidence that prolonged and exclusive breastfeeding improves children's cognitive development.** Source: Breastfeeding and Child Cognitive Development. *Archives of General Psychiatry*. 2008; 65(5):578-584.