



South Central Public Health District
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August 3, 2020

Press Release - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

During National Breastfeeding Month, Public Health Officials Urge Parents to Continue to Make Breastfeeding a Priority

SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO - Breast milk is the ideal nutrition for babies, bringing the right mix of protein, fats, and vitamins your baby needs to grow. The milk also has natural antibodies that will help your baby fight against viruses and bacteria, an especially important defense during a pandemic.

“If you want to make sure your baby is getting everything they need, breast milk is your best option,” said Cindi Holly-Rausch, SCPHD Registered Dietitian. “Right now our families need every advantage they can get over this virus. Breast milk gives your newborn’s immune system a helping hand.”

In a recent scientific brief, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended mothers with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 continue to breastfeed but take precautions to protect the infant. These precautions are important for any feeding method and include thorough hand washing before feeding and mask usage whenever the mother is near her baby.

“Mother and infant should be enabled to remain together while rooming-in throughout the day and night and to practice skin-to-skin contact, including kangaroo mother care, especially immediately after birth and during establishment of breastfeeding, whether they or their infants have suspected or confirmed COVID-19,” said the WHO in a statement.

Breast milk is not only important for disease prevention it also:

- Is easier for infants to digest than artificial baby milk/formula.
- May protect the baby against obesity, diabetes, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), asthma, eczema, colitis, and some cancers.

The benefits for Mom include:

- Helping reduce the risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, heart disease, stroke, type-2 diabetes, and postpartum depression.
- Burning between 500-600 calories a day, helping with weight loss.

South Central Public Health District offers Breastfeeding Peer Counselors for new Moms, to help parents understand and learn the basics of breastfeeding. Our WIC program also provides lactation counselors in each office to provide additional help. If you have any questions contact your nearest office and ask for

the WIC program: <https://www.phd5.idaho.gov/contact-us/> Learn more about breastfeeding and the WIC program here: <https://www.phd5.idaho.gov/WIC/>

WHO scientific brief: <https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/breastfeeding-and-covid-19>