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**Escambia County Health Department Celebrates World Breastfeeding Week
“Breastfeeding Support: Stay Connected”**

PENSACOLA – The Escambia County Health Department celebrates World Breastfeeding Week, August 1-7. This year’s theme is “Breastfeeding Support: Stay Connected”, which underscores the many ways mothers can seek and receive breastfeeding support.

Children who are exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life have lower rates of respiratory infections, dermatitis, asthma, obesity, diabetes, childhood leukemia, and a lower risk of sudden infant death syndrome, based on the World Health Organization and American Academy of Pediatrics. According to the Centers for Disease Control, only 12.9 percent of mothers and babies in Florida reach this goal.

“The first thing we recommend for a newly pregnant mom is to get lots of education and develop a support system while she is still pregnant,” said Anne Sanborn, breastfeeding program coordinator and board certified lactation consultant at the Escambia County Health Department WIC/Nutrition Division. “When mothers get breastfeeding support, they are more satisfied with their breastfeeding experience because they resolve questions and problems quicker and are likely to breastfeed longer,” Sanborn said.

Often new mothers don’t have family or friends who breastfeed so they need to find connections in other ways. Sanborn recommends sites such as www.ibreastfeeding.com and www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding that allow subscriptions to breastfeeding email updates and connections through Facebook and Twitter. Mothers can also download a variety of breastfeeding apps for iPhones, Android phones and Blackberry devices to help manage schedules, learn about breastfeeding, and even find breastfeeding-friendly locations as they shop or travel.

The Escambia County Health Department offers breastfeeding classes twice a month, including a class for Spanish-speaking clients held quarterly. Mothers enrolled in the WIC program have access to a peer counselor who provides one-on-one counseling and follows the mother from pregnancy through the first year of the baby’s life. Other local resources for breastfeeding information and support include area hospitals, Baptist Health Care and Sacred Heart Hospital, and the La Leche League.

For more information about breastfeeding resources, visit www.escambiahealth.com or call the Escambia County Health Department at 850.595.6668, ext. 212.

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