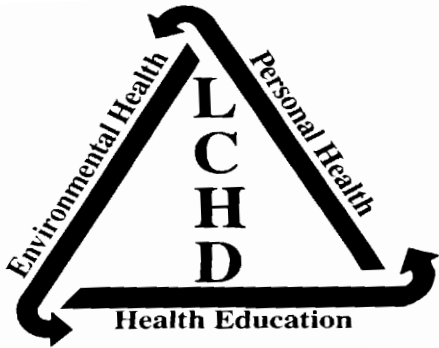


## MEDIA RELEASE



Date: August 9, 2024  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
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**For Immediate Release**

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### “Illinois Breastfeeding Month”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS; contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 433-3366.

OTTAWA, IL— The State of Illinois recognizes August as Breastfeeding Promotion Month. The 2024 theme is “Closing the Gap: Breastfeeding Support for All.” bringing focus to breastfeeding and working parents and how individuals and organizations can protect, promote, and support breastfeeding in the work environment. LaSalle County Health Department along with medical authorities, including the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists support and encourage all new mothers to embrace breastfeeding as the preferred method of infant feeding for the first year of life. Illinois’ Breastfeeding initiative helps focus on the lifelong benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and infant. Research is clear that breastfeeding is the optimal nutrition and the perfect life-sustaining food for babies. Breastfeeding provides both nutritional and non-nutritional benefits to the infant and mother.

Breast milk is the basic foundation for infant nutrition for the first year of life. It also provides many benefits to the mother as well by helping to protect against breast and ovarian cancers, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and weak bones later in life. Another benefit worth mentioning is that it also helps the mother get to her pre-pregnancy shape faster.

Breastfeeding also allows you and your baby to get closer- physically and emotionally. So while your child is feeding, the bond between you can grow stronger. All the while you will be helping to protect your baby from medical conditions from mild to severe, such as ear infections, gastro-intestinal problems, to childhood cancers and many other conditions. According to the AAP breastfeeding is also associated with a reduction in sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Babies are born expecting to breastfeed! However, there is a “learning curve”

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for mother and baby as they initiate breastfeeding. This is a key opportunity for friends and family to provide support to the new mom. Expert professional support and education is also available if needed.

Practice the ABC's of Breastfeeding.

- A – Awareness to when your baby is showing signs of needing to feed and responding to those cues.
- B – Be patient and allow your baby to guide you on the journey in the early days of breastfeeding. Unlike formula feeding which is typically more scheduled, breastfeeding is driven by the baby's demand.
- C – Comfort. The more comfortable and relaxed the mom is, the more enjoyable feedings will be.

In addition there are things that Fathers can do to support breastfeeding. They can provide support to the mother and make sure she feels comfortable. Encourage her to breastfeed. Learn about breastfeeding and how it works. Learn what the hunger cues of the baby are. Attend breastfeeding classes. Help with other tasks around the house, and bond with the baby when they are not being breastfed.

Breastfeeding for any amount of time benefits both moms and babies. We congratulate all breastfeeding moms on making this choice! For more information on breastfeeding you can contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 433-3366.

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