

## **Local celebrations of World Breastfeeding Week-7-25-11**

**Fort Myers, FL—Breastfeeding mothers and supporters who show up to celebrate World Breastfeeding Week August 1-5 will be pampered with gifts, giveaways, raffles and refreshments at numerous locations in Lee and Hendry counties served by the Women Infants Children program through their health departments.**

**All locations will offer demonstrations of how to carry babies in slings and education to overcome obstacles preventing exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of baby's lives. About 75% of mothers in the U.S. start out breastfeeding, according to the Centers for Disease Control, but the rate drops to 13% exclusively breastfeeding at the end of six months.**

**In Florida rates are even lower. Only 73.4% of mothers begin breastfeeding and less than 10% are exclusively breastfeeding at the end of six months.**

**“We want to eliminate the obstacles to exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a baby's life in Lee County,” said Dr. Judith Hartner, Lee County Health Department director. “These celebrations are designed to encourage women to breastfeed longer, encourage employer and family support and help mothers overcome obstacles that cause them to want to quit breastfeeding early.”**

**The celebrations are:**

- Monday, August 1 from 12:00 to 1 p.m. in Clewiston at 1100 S. Olympia and in Lehigh Acres at 5624 8<sup>th</sup> Street West.**
- Wednesday, August 3 from 1 to 3 p.m. in San Carlos at 18070 S. Tamiami Trail.**
- Thursday, August 4 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. in North Fort Myers at 83 Pondella Road, and from 12 to 1 p.m. in LaBelle at 1140 Pratt Blvd.**
- Friday, August 5 from 12 to 4 p.m. in Fort Myers at 3920 Michigan Avenue.**

**Friday afternoon's final celebration will include elected officials, a pediatrician and a nurse fluent in English and Spanish speaking about the breastfeeding benefits to mother and baby, and the resources available to help overcome obstacles of exclusive breastfeeding through six months of life.**

**CDC lists some baby benefits of breastfeeding as protection from infections and illnesses including diarrhea and pneumonia, reduced likelihood to develop asthma, reduced likelihood to become obese and reduced risk of sudden infant death syndrome. CDC says the breastfeeding mothers benefit with a decreased risk of breast and ovarian cancers.**