



# AUGUST IS NATIONAL BREASTFEEDING MONTH

## WHY IS BREASTFEEDING SO IMPORTANT?

Most health professionals are familiar with the importance of breastfeeding. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), along with many other leading organizations, continues to support the unequivocal evidence that breastfeeding protects against a variety of diseases and conditions in infancy and childhood such as<sup>i</sup>.

- Diarrhea
- Necrotizing enterocolitis
- Respiratory tract infection
- Otitis media
- Late-onset sepsis in preterm infants
- Type 1 and type 2 diabetes
- Lymphoma, leukemia and Hodgkin's disease
- Childhood overweight and obesity

Breastfeeding also protects maternal health, through:

- Decreased postpartum bleeding and more rapid uterine involution<sup>i</sup>
- Decreased menstrual blood loss and increased child spacing (lactational amenorrhea)<sup>i</sup>
- Earlier return to prepregnancy weight<sup>i</sup>
- Decreased risk of breast and ovarian cancers<sup>ii</sup>
- Decreased risk of hypertension<sup>ii</sup>
- Decreased risk of type 2 diabetes<sup>ii</sup>

Breastfeeding protects the environment and economy as well. Breastfeeding families are sick less often and the parents miss less work. It does not require the use of energy for manufacturing or create waste or air pollution. There is no risk of contamination and it is always at the right temperature and ready to feed<sup>i</sup>.

Additionally, when breastfeeding is going well, it can be a protective factor for maternal mental health. It can, however, be a mental health risk factor when not going well, especially when a woman feels physical pain and disappointment in not being able to feed her baby as she planned, thus necessitating the need for readily accessible, unbiased support.

## WHY IS GREATER SUPPORT NEEDED?

While 90.6% of Kansas mothers who had a baby in 2017 or 2018 reported ever breastfeeding their infants, only 72% reported breastfeeding for at least 8 weeks<sup>iii</sup>. Additionally, the National Immunization Survey (NIS) 2016 indicates that only 58.2% of Kansas babies continue to be breastfed at 6 months<sup>iv</sup>.

Looking at breastfeeding rates at two months postpartum can help us identify which mothers are at risk of early weaning, as well as factors that may play a role in supporting the 90% of mothers who choose to breastfeed.

### Unmet basic needs\*

A lower proportion of mothers who had certain unmet basic needs during pregnancy reported breastfeeding their infants for at least 8 weeks, compared to those who had their needs met during pregnancy:

**63.3%** Among mothers with any unmet basic needs during pregnancy (95% CI: 56.1% to 70%)

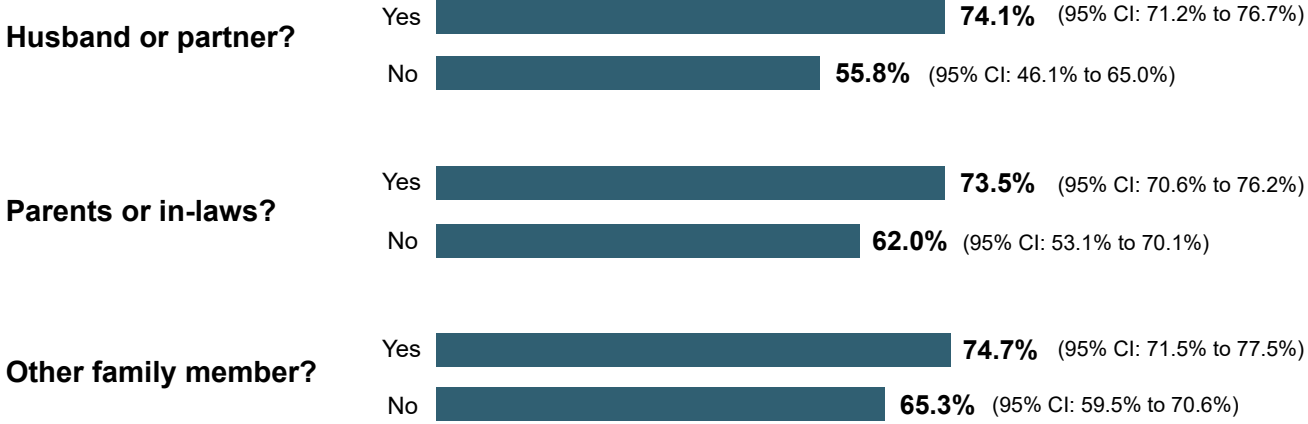
**74.5%** Among mothers with no unmet basic needs during pregnancy (95% CI: 71.5% to 77.2%)

\*Any unmet needs during pregnancy = respondent indicated not having affordable transportation, skipping meals or inability to afford food, no access to a phone, inconsistent housing, unsafe housing, crowded living space, and/or could not keep basic utility services on; no unmet needs = respondent indicated that all of these needs were met.



### Social Support †

Mothers who identified someone who would help them if a problem came up had higher breastfeeding rates at 8 weeks, compared to those who didn't identify a person in this role who would help them:



Unequal access to breastfeeding supportive policies and environments have created persistent racial and ethnic disparities in breastfeeding initiation and duration. Now, more than ever, we must come together to identify and implement the policy and systems changes that are needed to ensure that every family that chooses breastfeeding has the support and resources they need to succeed<sup>v</sup>.

### What can I do as a Provider?

Providers can play a key role in promoting breastfeeding and supporting families. You can:

- Communicate the [importance] of breastfeeding and the risks of formula feeding to all of your patients.<sup>i</sup>
- Educate yourself about breastfeeding and how to care for breastfeeding families in your practice.<sup>i</sup> (See Resources for breastfeeding education opportunities in Kansas.)
- Know how to assess breastfeeding and manage common breastfeeding problems.<sup>i</sup>
- Know (and utilize) the local resources available to you and your patients (WIC, breastfeeding support groups, lactation consultants, breast pump rental stations, etc.).<sup>i</sup>
- Understand how to use breastfeeding equipment and be able to support women who wish to return to work or school while breastfeeding.<sup>i</sup>
- Display positive images of breastfeeding in your office and encourage the elimination of practices that interfere with breastfeeding (free formula, industry gifts, or coupons to parents, separation of mother and infant, inappropriate feeding images, etc.).<sup>i</sup>
- Support breastfeeding research.<sup>i</sup>
- Advocate for positive media coverage about breastfeeding.<sup>i</sup>
- Support businesses in your community to be breastfeeding friendly.<sup>i</sup> Look for the "Breastfeeding Welcome Here" window decal.
- Support breastfeeding friendly policies.
- Join your local breastfeeding coalition.
- Educate yourself on breastfeeding disparities in your community and identify ways you can affect these in your practice.

<sup>†</sup> Social support during pregnancy came from a question about who would help the respondent if a problem came up (indicated by checking "yes" to the answer item).

# SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

## 1. Did You Know?

Even though the majority of Kansas mothers initiate breastfeeding immediately following the birth of their baby, only half are still doing so at 6 months of age, and only one-third are still breastfeeding on their baby's first birthday. Research shows that support is key to helping women achieve longer durations of breastfeeding! Becoming a Mom® classes, WIC breastfeeding peer counselor appointments, and La Leche League meetings are a great way for parents to establish support and get valuable information both before and after the birth of their baby.

For more information about Becoming a Mom®: [https://www.kdheks.gov/c-f/perinatal\\_participating\\_communities.htm](https://www.kdheks.gov/c-f/perinatal_participating_communities.htm)

For more information about La Leche League: <https://www.kansasll.org/>

## 2. Everyone can support breastfeeding in Kansas!

Having support from friends, family, childcare providers, local businesses, and employers can make all the difference to a breastfeeding family. Whether dropping off a meal, supporting her choice to feed her baby in a public space, or providing adequate breaks and space to pump during work time, a little bit of support goes a long way towards helping families to meet their breastfeeding goals. For more ideas on how to be a great breastfeeding support, check out the CDC's "Guide to Support Breastfeeding Mothers and Babies" here: <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/bf-guide-508.pdf>

## 3. It takes a village!

Mothers who receive support during their pregnancy and after giving birth are more likely to breastfeed, and to continue breastfeeding for longer periods of time. There are many resources available to families, including in-person support groups and virtual tools to troubleshoot problems. For a list of resources in your community, as well as links to verified online support, visit the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition's webpage located at [ksbreastfeeding.org/resources/](http://ksbreastfeeding.org/resources/) or contact your local health department.

## 4. Breastfeeding your baby reduces medical costs<sup>vi</sup>

Breastfeeding has many benefits for the health of both mom and baby!

- Breastfeeding is a protective factor and reduces the risk of SIDS
- Babies who are breastfed are less likely to develop infections and illnesses including diarrhea, ear infections, and pneumonia
- Children who are breastfed for at least six months are less likely to become obese later in life
- Mothers who breastfeed have a decreased risk of developing breast and ovarian cancers

Adapted from information gathered at <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/breastfeeding/factsheet/index.html>

## 5. Why do mothers stop breastfeeding?

According to the CDC, 60% of mothers stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. There are many factors that go into a mother's decision to stop breastfeeding her baby, including:

- Worry about baby getting enough milk
- Lack of support from family or friends
- Unsupportive workplace or child care
- Embarrassment feeding in public
- Lack of knowledgeable health care providers

Community support matters! For information about resources available in your community, contact your local health department or visit [ksbreastfeeding.org/resources/](http://ksbreastfeeding.org/resources/)

Adapted from information found at <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/resources/calltoaction.htm> and <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/facts.html>

## 6. Representation matters!

Unequal access to supportive breastfeeding policies and environments have created persistent racial and ethnic disparities in breastfeeding initiation and duration. Identifying and supporting underrepresented communities is key to ensuring equal access to resources and helping every family that chooses breastfeeding to reach their goals.

Adapted from information found at <http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/p/cm/ld/fid=909>

# RESOURCES

## National Breastfeeding Month Specific

### United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC) [Website](#)

- [Webinars](#) – National Breastfeeding Conference & Convening Reimagined – Robust series of webcast sessions hosted during the month of August, on-demand and free of charge
- Weekly Themes and Resources:
  - Week 1 (August 1-7): [World Breastfeeding Week: Support Breastfeeding for a Healthier Planet](#)
  - Week 2 (August 9-15): [Native Breastfeeding Week](#)
  - Week 3 (August 16-24): [Spotlight on Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies](#)
  - Week 4 (August 25-31): [Black Breastfeeding Week: Revive. Restore. Reclaim](#)
- [US Breastfeeding Committee's 2020 NBM Toolkit](#)
- [NICHQ 2020 NBM Toolkit](#)

## Patient/Client Resources

- [Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition](#)
  - [Local Resource Directory](#)
  - [Parent Education](#)
- [La Leche League of Kansas](#) – Mother to Mother Support; Virtual Support; Breastfeeding Information
- [La Leche League USA](#) – Breastfeeding Information / Parent Education
- [La Leche League International](#) – Breastfeeding Resources and Support
- [Kellymom](#) – Breastfeeding Resources
- [Kansas WIC](#) – Breastfeeding Resources
- [Office on Women's Health](#) – Breastfeeding Resources

## Provider Resources

- [Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition](#)
  - [Resources](#) – includes: [local resource directory](#); patient education handouts; podcasts; position statements and policies; professional organizations
  - [Physician specific resources](#)
  - [Educational Opportunities](#) – includes education for: child care providers; community supporters; healthcare professionals; parents; education events – [past](#) and [upcoming](#); [education courses](#)
- [Kansas Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics – Breastfeeding Resources](#) – includes: how to have a Breastfeeding Friendly Practice; coding for breastfeeding; model policy; statements and clinical protocols; educational opportunities
- [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\) Breastfeeding Resources Library](#) – Fact Sheets and Infographics
- [La Leche League International Webinar Library](#)
- [Infographics](#) – Benefits of Breastfeeding

## Cross-Sector Initiatives/Tools

- [Warm Chain of Support for Breastfeeding](#) – Campaign that strives to link different actors across the health, community and workplace sectors to provide a continuum of care during the first 1000 days
- **Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition**
  - [Communities Supporting Breastfeeding](#)
  - [Support for Breastfeeding Employees and Students](#)
  - [Breastfeeding Welcome Here](#)
  - [Hospital-Based Initiatives](#)
  - [Tools for Coalitions](#)



- American Academy of Pediatrics, Advocacy & Policy, AAP Health Initiatives, Breastfeeding, Benefits of Breastfeeding; retrieved from <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Breastfeeding/Pages/Benefits-of-Breastfeeding.aspx>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; Breastfeeding Programs and Policies, Breastfeeding Uptake, and Maternal Health Outcomes in Developed Countries; retrieved from <https://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/products/breastfeeding/research>
- Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), 2017-2018
- CDC National Immunization Survey (NIS) 2016-2017, among 2015 births; retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/2018breastfeedingreportcard.pdf>
- United States Breastfeeding Committee, News and Info, National Breastfeeding Month 2020; retrieved from <http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/p/cm/ld/fid=909>
- Adapted from information gathered at <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/breastfeeding/factsheet/index.html>