



NEWS RELEASE

St. Charles County Government

Department of Community Health and the Environment

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COMBAT OBESITY BY STARTING HEALTHY NUTRITION EARLY

Missouri Dedicates August to Touting the Benefits of Breastfeeding on Development

St. Charles County, Missouri – A recent survey ranked Missouri among the states with the highest percentage of obese residents. Proper nutrition — beginning with infants and young children — is a great way to counteract the growing trend of obesity in the United States. As a result, the St. Charles County Division of Public Health's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program offers developing families guidance on proper nutrition at no cost.

The WIC Program presents pregnant and breastfeeding women, postpartum women, infants, and children up to age five with specific supplemental foods, nutrition education and counseling, health screening, and referrals to health care. In addition, the program provides support to women with newborn or infant children on the benefits of breastfeeding. Statistics show that women who participate in the WIC Program have fewer low birth weight babies, experience fewer infant deaths, and eat healthier.

The WIC program, which is funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is based at the Division of Public Health office at 1650 Boone's Lick Road in St. Charles. Participants must meet income guidelines and be determined by health professionals to be at a nutritional risk. Persons interested in applying for WIC or in need of more information should contact the WIC office at (636) 949-7402 or visit www.scchealth.org. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To accentuate its positive impact on the growth of young families, Missouri has declared August to be **Breastfeeding Month**. Doctors consider a mother's milk to be the best food for her baby since it provides all of the essential nutrients a baby needs to grow and to enhance brain development. As the nutritional composition of breast milk changes with a baby's nutritional needs and provides necessary antibodies that protect against infection, breastfed babies have a lower rate of sickness, which results in fewer expensive doctors' visits and less lost work for parents. Mothers also gain the benefits of bonding more closely with their child, improved bone density, and a reduced risk for breast, uterine and ovarian cancers. For more benefits of breastfeeding, please visit <http://www.health.mo.gov/living/families/babies/breastfeeding/index.php>.

The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment is committed to the protection and enhancement of health and the quality of life for all members of our community. For information on programs offered and to discover ways the Department assists our community, please visit www.stcchealth.org or call 636-949-7400.

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