



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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Navajo Nation proclaims August as breastfeeding month

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo leaders have declared August Breastfeeding Promotion Month.

Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., Navajo Division of Health Director Anslem Roanhorse, Navajo WIC Nutrition Program Director Adele R. King and Navajo Area Indian Health Service Director John Hubbard signed a proclamation Monday to promote breastfeeding.

The proclamation recognizes all breastfeeding mothers and thanks them. It calls upon community partners that have collaborated with the Navajo WIC Program to celebrate with ceremonies and activities that acknowledge efforts to promote breastfeeding.

“It promotes a very positive and healthy relationship if you breastfeed,” said Roberta Duncan, breastfeeding coordinator for the Navajo Nation WIC. “That bond helps mothers’ parenting skills and they relate to their infant better.”

She said breastfeeding is natural and provides more nutrition to infants. She said formula feeding leads to more illness and stomach upset, with a risk of diabetes and obesity being much greater for children later in life.

She said it is believed that there may be substances in breast milk to make babies feel full and to regulate their appetites.

“We should not be feeding suckling infants cows milk,” she said. “They should not be getting cow’s milk, period. Artificial milk is cow’s milk.”

“Breastfeeding promotes a very positive and healthy relationship.”

– Roberta Dunca
Breastfeeding Coordinat
Navajo Nation WIC Program

In the Navajo WIC program, 76.6 percent of women initiate breastfeeding. At six months, that drops to 31.2 percent, Ms. Duncan said.

“We meet the Healthy People 2010 by the federal Health and Human Services Department goals for breastfeeding initiation,” she said.

She said there are lots of barriers to breastfeeding. Some women believe they don’t have enough milk, there’s a lack of social support and lack of confidence, or going back to work or school. She said there’s also conflicting information among health professionals.”

“Breast milk so many living substances in it that you cannot duplicate anywhere,” Ms. Duncan said. “Living hormones, antibodies, living bacteria that eat up bad bacteria. That is why breastfed babies have fewer illnesses like ear infections, stomach problems, colds, allergies and less diabetes and being overweight later in life.”

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