Preparing for Breastfeeding during Pregnancy

Breastfeeding is one of the most important things you can do for the health and well-being of your baby. Your breast milk is specifically designed for your baby to provide the best nutrition. Breastfeeding also protects your baby from infections and decreases your child’s risk of developing asthma, allergies, and obesity. Many women begin breastfeeding for both the health benefits and the unique bonding experience it nurtures between mother and child.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organization encourage exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life with continued breastfeeding for at least a year or as long as it is mutually desired by the mother and child. The health benefits of breastfeeding continue past one year of age.

Here are some helpful resources to help you plan ahead for successful breastfeeding:

- Talk with a WIC Lactation Consultant
- Pregnancy is a good time to meet and talk to other moms who have successfully breastfed their babies. Talk to women you know who have had an experience with breastfeeding.
- Call your local hospital to find out if they offer a class on preparing for breastfeeding.
- Call the local chapter of La Leche League or visit www.lalecheleague.org to find information, education, or support in your community.
- Call the Federal Breastfeeding Hotline at 1-800-944-9662 for information and support in both English and Spanish.

Take care of your needs:

- Purchase items you will need that will help you with breastfeeding, such as nursing bras and pads, and a comfortable nursing pillow.
- Reach out to family, friends, healthcare professionals and others for support.
- Remember a good support system is essential for getting off to a good start!