



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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CDPH Celebrates National Breastfeeding Awareness Month

SACRAMENTO – California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director and State Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith today reminds us that breastfeeding is the first step to a healthy life and forms a lasting bond between mother and child. The 2015 National Breastfeeding Month theme “Let’s Make It Work” sets the goal of empowering all women, no matter where they work, to successfully combine work with breastfeeding.

“As National Breastfeeding Month kicks off in August, California should be proud of its efforts to lead the nation in progressive laws that protect a mother’s right to breastfeed her baby,” said Dr. Smith. “Through public policy, California has committed to ensuring that women who want to breastfeed are given the best chance at being successful.”

Not all working mothers in California have access to workplace support for breastfeeding, according to data from the Maternal and Infant Health Assessment (MIHA), an annual survey of new mothers. CDPH reports that only half of California mothers returning to work have a place and time to pump breast milk and low-income women are less likely to have access to these accommodations. Women with workplace support for breastfeeding are twice as likely to report exclusive breastfeeding at three months postpartum than women without accommodations. California law requires employers to provide breastfeeding women with time and private space to express breast milk.

Breastfeeding reduces the risks of acute and chronic health conditions for both mothers and babies. Six months of exclusive breastfeeding and continued breastfeeding for one year or longer, as long as it is mutually desired by mother and infant, is recommended.

Ongoing efforts have resulted in California meeting all of the Healthy People 2020 objectives for breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity. However, additional efforts are still needed to ensure that all women have equal access to lactation accommodations in the workplace and quality maternity care that supports breastfeeding.

Related information, can be found on the CDPH website:

- [California Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. Recognition Letter](#)
- [Infographic: Workplace Breastfeeding Support in California](#)
- [Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Program](#)
- [Women, Infants and Children \(WIC\) Program](#)

- [California Department of Public Health Breastfeeding Web Page](#)
- [Breastfeeding Data](#)

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