

Breastfeed for a Healthier Future! Community health Fair

Host a ***Breastfeed For a Healthier Future!*** Community health fair, and use the NE code *BF-000-52: National BF Month* to award nutrition education credit to participants who attend the National Breastfeeding Month activities. Set up learning stations to provide information, education and materials on how breastfeeding positively affects the lives of not only the present, but also the health of families and the environment for generations to come.

Suggested ideas for the stations include:

Station 1: Breastfeeding protects the health of infants and moms – for life.

- Use the [Does Formula Stack Up?](#) building block activity to demonstrate the difference between breastmilk and formula, and to highlight the long term health effects of breastfeeding for babies and moms. Let the participants know that:
 - Breastmilk reduces babies risks of:
 - Infections- Including pneumonia, ear infections, stomach infections, and diarrhea
 - Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
 - Allergies and asthma
 - Childhood and adult obesity
 - Leukemia and other childhood cancers
 - Diabetes and heart disease
 - Score higher on standardized intelligence tests
 - Breastfeeding also benefits moms by reducing their risk of:
 - Breast and ovarian cancer
 - Diabetes and high blood pressure
 - “Baby blues” or postpartum depression after the baby is born
 - Mothers who **do not** breastfeed have difficulty losing weight after giving birth
- Check participant understanding! Ask participants:
 - Identify at least one difference of formula and breastmilk

Station 2: Breastfeeding protects and cultivates healthier cultures.

- Show the [History of Breastfeeding](#) video and highlight what breastfeeding advocates are doing to promote and support breastfeeding.
- Use the [Breastfeed for a Healthier Future](#) handout to highlight how breastfeeding cultivates healthy cultural practices
- Children who are breastfed are more likely to breastfeed their children, positively impacting the health of generations to come.
- Check participant understanding! Ask participants:
 - How does breastfeeding promote healthier culture?

Station 3: Breastfeeding protects the environment

- Provide information on how breastfeeding helps us to protect the environment. Let the participants know that:
 - Breastmilk is a renewable resource that is always ready and at the right temperature and does not generate waste.
 - Breastmilk is produced and delivered to the consumer without any pollution.

- Not breastfeeding has environmental costs as formula leaves an ecological footprint, needing energy for manufacture, packaging materials, as well as fuel for transport.
- Formula cans and bottle supplies create more trash and plastic waste.
- **Recommended Activity**
 - Collect a six months' supply worth of formula cans and build a stack in the clinic to create a visual on how much waste is generated from formula use.
- Check participant understanding! Ask participants:
 - How does breastfeeding help us protect our environment?

Station 4: Breastfeeding protects the family's economy.

- Breastfeeding helps to protect the family's economy. Inform participants that:
 - Formula and feeding supplies can cost well over \$1,500 each year.
 - Formula preparation is not simple and can take a lot of time.
 - Breastmilk is free and always available and at the right temperature.
 - Breastfeeding helps make a more productive workforce. Mothers who breastfeed miss less days of work to care for sick infants than mothers who feed their infants formula.
 - Breastfed babies are also sick less often, which helps to reduce family medical care costs.
- Check participant understanding! Ask participants:
 - How does breastfeeding protect the family's economy?

Station 5: Breastfeeding protects the lives of babies during emergencies.

- During an emergency, such as natural disaster, breastfeeding can save baby's life by:
 - Protecting your baby from the risks of unsafe water for formula prep.
 - Breastmilk is always safe and readily available without needing other supplies.
 - Breastfeeding protects your baby against respiratory illnesses and diarrhea.
 - Your milk is always at the right temperature for your baby. It helps to keep your baby's body temperature from dropping too low.
- **Recommended materials**
 - Use the [Breastfeeding during emergencies](#) Handout to guide the discussion
- Check participant understanding! Ask participants:
 - How does breastfeeding protect baby's lives during emergencies?