Breastfeeding Peer Counseling: what it’s all about... Mom’s helping moms

My name is Marissa Packhorse I am a breastfeeding peer counselor, my purpose is to help mothers in my community feel confident in their selves to identify their options on how to feed their babies.

If they choose to bottle feed or breastfeed we help them and support them in their decisions. The breastfeeding peer counselor is here to support breastfeeding also to support the mother’s decision on how she wants to feed her baby.

When working with moms we try to educate good reasons to breastfeed.
8 Amazing Benefits of Breastfeeding for Babies

**Optimal Nutrition**
Human milk contains the right nutrients in the right amounts for baby. The nutrient composition even changes to meet the baby’s needs over the course of the feeding day, and the infant’s lifespan.

**Stronger Immune System**
Human milk contains maternal antibodies that are passed from mother to baby, substances that weaken or destroy harmful bacteria, compounds that help generate antibodies, and factors that promote the growth of friendly bacteria in the infant’s gut.

**Lower Risk for Obesity**
The risk of overweight in children may be reduced by 43% for every month an infant is breastfed up to 9 months of age. This benefit may continue throughout the infant’s teen and adult years.

**Helps Brain Development**
Studies suggest that breastfeeding is linked with improved cognitive development. The effects appear to be strongest with exclusive and prolonged breastfeeding.

**Reduced Risk for Allergies**
During the early days of breastfeeding, human milk contains colostrum, which helps protect the infant’s gut from potential allergens and foreign bodies that contribute to allergies. Plus, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months reduces exposure to potential food allergens.

**Decreased Risk of SIDS**
Several studies suggest that exclusive or partial breastfeeding reduces the risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Infants who are breastfed may have up to 56% less chance of dying from SIDS than infants who are not breastfed.

**Lower Risk for Diabetes**
In comparison to formula-fed infants, breastfed infants tend to have a lower risk for developing both type 1 and type 2 diabetes later in life, especially those infants at higher risk of developing the disease.

**Protects Against Heart Disease**
Several studies suggest a protective effect of breastfeeding on certain cardiovascular risk factors, such as atheroembolic blood pressure, and cholesterol profile, along with other cardiovascular risk factors.

References:
- American Journal of Clinical Nutrition: [http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/54/3/443.abstract](http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/54/3/443.abstract)
- Diabetes Care: [http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/39/12/2713.full.pdf](http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/39/12/2713.full.pdf)

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Breast Basics

We address barriers they have had with breastfeeding. We also discuss basic anatomy of the breast.

We try to go over prenatal preparation for breastfeeding.

- What to expect in the first few weeks
- What does it look like
- How much is enough
- How often am I going to feed
- How does milk production work

On the left is a picture of a drop of formula under the microscope. On the right is a drop of human milk. Human milk is a living substance which contains cells and other living matter that helps babies fight disease.
We go over basic positioning and latch of the baby and tips for early success.

We try to prevent any common misconceptions with breastfeeding and deal with common concerns to better educate mothers.

- Breastfeeding is easy (it takes practice)
- It’s supposed to hurt in the beginning (it is not supposed to hurt)
- It’s the only way to bond with baby (there are many ways to bond with baby)
- It may help with postpartum depression (this is true)

Our goal is to make our WIC mother’s feel confident in their decisions to breastfeed or formula feed.
Think back to how you felt the first time you became a new mother. What excited you? What worries did you have? Who did you turn to for support with breastfeeding?

Many new mothers turn to other moms just like them to share experiences.

When new moms have someone who understands what they have been through, it makes it easier to cope with the questions and challenges of being a new parent.

WIC peer counselors are mothers in the community with personal breastfeeding experience who give information and support to new moms.