



[World Health Organization](#)

Infants should be exclusively breastfed – receive only breast milk – for the first six months of life to achieve optimal growth, development and health.

"Exclusive breastfeeding" is defined as giving no other food or drink – not even water – with the exception of oral rehydration solution *if medically necessary*, or drops/syrups of vitamins, minerals or medicines.

[American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

The AAP recommends that babies be exclusively breastfed for about the first 6 months of life. This means your baby needs no additional foods (except Vitamin D) or fluids unless medically indicated.

## Exclusive Breastfeeding

*One of the most critical times to offer breastfeeding support is when moms request formula. Peer counselors can help moms to explore their reasons for thinking they might need to use formula. Often the reason is something the peer counselor can help them resolve.*

### Mom may be having difficulty breastfeeding.

As a peer counselor you may be able to help her resolve her breastfeeding difficulty so that she can continue breastfeeding.

- Good questions to ask:
  - What brings you into WIC today?
  - How is feeding going?
  - What concerns are you having?
  - Tell me how feeding is going for you and your baby.
- Ask open-ended questions to determine if mom is having a true problem or perceived problem. Sometimes moms are anxious at first and just need some support and encouragement.
- Ask open-ended questions to determine if you can help her with her difficulties or if she may need referred to a lactation consultant or health care provider.
- Follow-up with mom to see if her difficulties have been resolved.

### Mom may be worried she does not have enough milk.

You can teach her the signs of plentiful milk supply, and offer encouragement and support to help her feel confident in her milk supply.

- Signs of a good milk supply:
  - Baby is gaining weight
  - After day four, baby is having 5 wet and 3 dirty diapers a day.
  - Baby seems satisfied and sleeps some between feedings.
  - Tummies are small, about the size of their fist, breastmilk is easily and quickly digested, so it is normal for babies to eat often
  - It's not unusual for newborns to nurse 8-12 times in 24 hours that is every 1.3- 3 hours!
  - Cluster feeding is normal and helps build mom's milk supply.
  - Growth spurts can be at 3 days, 10 days, 3 weeks, 6 weeks and 3 months of age but can happen any time and they are also normal to help build and maintain mom's milk supply.
  - Frequent nursing increases mom's milk supply as baby grows- these are key times to make follow-up phone calls to mom.

### Mom may want formula because she is returning to work or school.

She may not know she can pump milk for her baby while she is away. You can teach her about pumping and storing milk, and provide information about the breast pumps WIC provides.

- Some moms think they have to wean and give formula right away if they are returning to work or school.
- Encourage moms to nurse before and after work, and completely on the days she has off and more whenever she is with her baby.
- Evaluate the best time for her to start bottles. If she has time to wait, it is ideal to wait until breastfeeding is well established.
- Help moms set up a pumping schedule or provide examples of schedules that could work for them.

# When to Provide Peer Counseling to Support Exclusive Breastfeeding

## During Pregnancy-

- Start peer counseling contacts during pregnancy.
- Discuss health benefits and health qualities of breast milk.
- Provide tips and how to information as well as anticipatory guidance for breastfeeding newborns.
- Assure them that you will be there to support them and make sure to inform them of how to contact you.

## When Baby Arrives-

- When a mom calls for a WIC appointment after baby is born:
  - They should be encouraged to talk with a peer counselor.
  - Front desk staff should consider transferring the calls to peer counselors if they are available after they have made their appointment or asking the moms if they can have a peer counselor call them

## When New Moms Request Formula-

- Page one provides tips and strategies to support moms.
- “Just in case cans” can undermine mom’s confidence- sending her home with formula sends the message that we don’t think she will have enough milk:
  - If she has breastfeeding questions and concerns she is more likely to open the formula than to get help
  - Peer counselors can encourage moms to consider the value of the exclusive breastfeeding package. Even if she does decide she needs a can of formula on hand, the cost of one can of formula is much less than the value of the food package she would have to give up

**Your job is IMPORTANT- providing breastfeeding support is just as important as any other assistance WIC provides!!!**

Information summarized from [Hale Publishing](#) Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Module- Encourage Exclusive Breastfeeding: Promote WIC’s Exclusive Breastfeeding Food Package

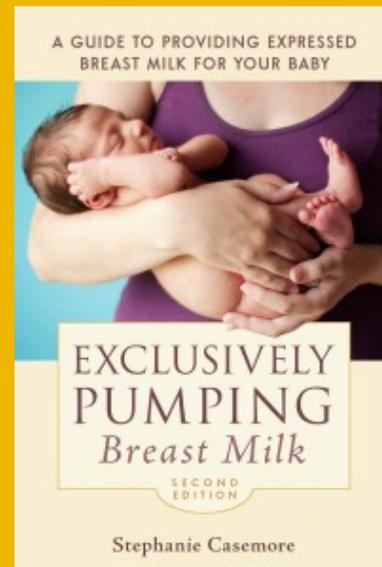


## World Breastfeeding Week August 1-7, 2015

**BREASTFEEDING AND WORK  
LET’S MAKE IT WORK!**

<http://worldbreastfeedingweek.org/>

Alaska WIC will be celebrating World Breastfeeding Week in August this year. In past years, Alaska WIC has celebrated this week in October. Mark your calendars and explore the resources available to you on the website. The theme for this year is working women and breastfeeding. If you are planning events or activities share them with our Facebook group- we would love to hear what you are planning!!



To follow up on one of the issues we discussed at our teleconference this quarter check out this [blog posting](#) with questions answered by Stephanie Casemore, author of the book *Exclusively Pumping Breast Milk*.



Our Facebook page for Alaska WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselors is a great way to communicate, share ideas and keep connected. Check our page often, share relevant posts and feel free to ask questions to your fellow peer counselors.

If you are a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor for Alaska WIC and have not been invited to join our Facebook page please contact Danielle Rybicki at [drrybicki@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:drrybicki@uaa.alaska.edu). This group is only for active Peer Counselors.

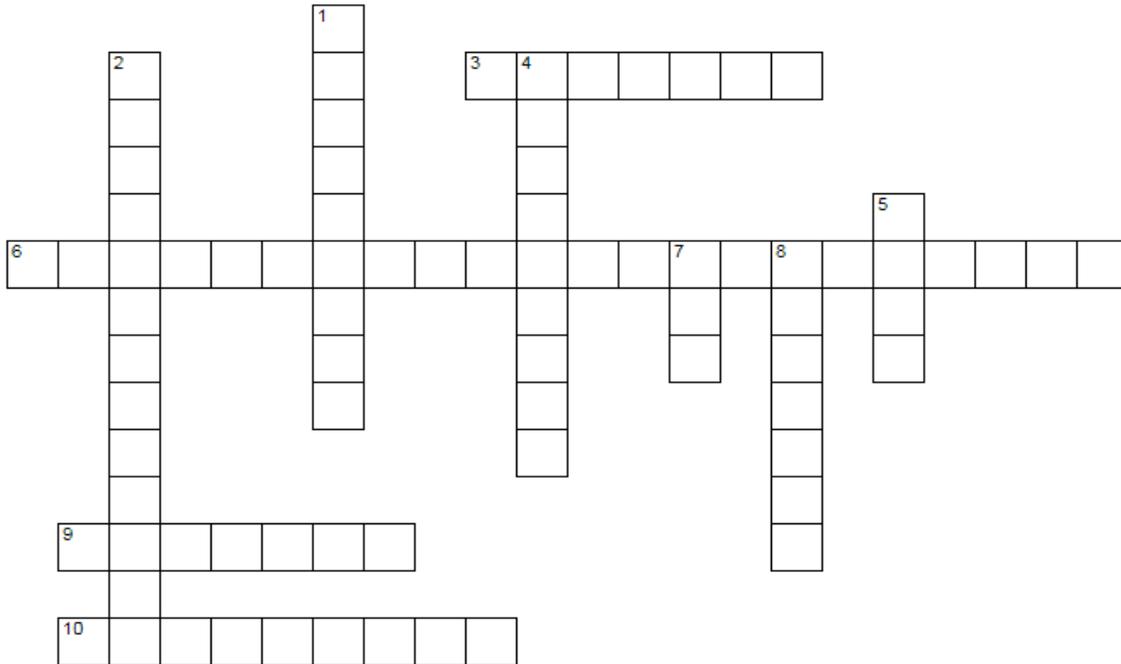
If you have any questions or ideas for future newsletter topics contact

Danielle Rybicki at [drrybicki@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:drrybicki@uaa.alaska.edu).

# EDUCATION CORNER

## Exclusive Breastfeeding Crossword Puzzle

Answer the following questions and complete the crossword puzzle.



### Across

3. If moms are starting back to work or school, it would be helpful to help them set up a \_\_\_\_\_ schedule.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ is giving no other food or drink – not even water – with the exception of oral rehydration solution if medically necessary, or drops/syrups of vitamins, minerals or medicines.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ feeding is normal and helps build a mother’s milk supply.
10. Peer counseling contacts should start during \_\_\_\_\_ whenever possible.

### Down

1. If a mom is worried she does not have enough milk, you can teach her the signs of a \_\_\_\_\_ milk supply.
2. When a mother calls to make a WIC appointment after her baby is born, she should be transferred to a \_\_\_\_\_ or referred to a peer counselor as soon as possible.
4. Giving a mother a “just in case” can of formula can \_\_\_\_\_ a woman’s confidence to breastfeed.
5. Some moms think they have to \_\_\_\_\_ and give formula right away if they are returning to work or school.
7. It is recommended by both WHO and AAP that babies be exclusively breastfed until \_\_\_\_\_ months of age.
8. One of the most critical times to offer breastfeeding support is when moms request \_\_\_\_\_.

Reading this newsletter and completing the education offering for the month is worth one continuing education hour for WIC BFPCs and CPAs. Continuing education hours are tracked at your local agency. [Click here](#) for a form to track your continuing education.