



Oregon WIC & Breastfeeding

Oregon WIC promotes breastfeeding as the norm for infant feeding.

Healthcare providers and their staff play a critical role in promoting exclusive breastfeeding and increasing breastfeeding duration. Successful breastfeeding works best when counseling and support efforts start early, and messaging with partners is aligned.

WIC encourages medical providers to emphasize:

- Exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months.
- Continued breastfeeding after solids are introduced, up to age one and beyond.
- The importance of breastfeeding for the mother, baby and society.
- A birth plan that supports breastfeeding.
- Early skin-to-skin contact.
- Early initiation of breastfeeding.
- Twenty-four-hour rooming in.
- Feeding on demand and baby-led feeding.
- Frequent feedings to assure optimal milk production.
- Positions that support a good latch, such as the "laid back" position where the mother leans back in a chair.

Observe breastfeeding and look for:

- A good latch and swallowing sounds.
- Signs of effective breastfeeding.
- Any breastfeeding challenges.

Talk to pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers about:

- Hand expression – introduce and teach it.
- Resources to support lactation.
- Visiting WIC for additional support for income-eligible women.

Discuss return-to-work plans and:

- Ask about a breastfeeding plan for returning to work.
- Provide documentation to obtain breast pumps through OHP or private insurance. WIC offers breast pumps for women who cannot obtain a pump through their insurer and under certain circumstances. WIC offers the following pumps:
 - **Multi-user breast pump loans** for WIC mothers with medical needs (premature birth, multiple birth, etc.)
 - **Personal pumps** for WIC mothers temporarily separated from their babies for work or school (20 hours/week or more)
 - **Manual pumps** for WIC mothers with short-term separations (less than 20 hours/week)
- Help breastfeeding moms know their rights. Refer them to the [state and federal breastfeeding laws](#).

WIC and healthcare staff can discuss:

- How WIC can offer breastfeeding support. Some WIC programs have IBCLCs and peer counselors on staff to provide enhanced breastfeeding support.
- Breastfeeding messaging and resources.
- How best to communicate and coordinate care.
- The scheduling of a WIC presentation at a medical staff meeting.

Collaborative breastfeeding project between WIC and pediatrics

Linn County WIC and Samaritan Mid-Valley Pediatrics teamed up to expand breastfeeding services. A bilingual, WIC International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) worked for two days in this pediatric office offering evaluation and consultation to mother and baby. In almost two years, over 510 client consultations took place and two breastfeeding support groups were started at WIC and Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital. This collaboration resulted in longer duration of breastfeeding for mothers, reduced the need for physician time spent on lactation counseling, offered more convenient appointments for families, and helped lead to lactation licensure in Oregon. This type of collaboration could be replicable, scalable and sustainable with a billing component in place.

Breastfeeding Resources

[Public Health Division breastfeeding webpage](#) offers information on breastfeeding training opportunities, data, information on maternity care practices, promotional materials, information on returning to work and much more.